Youthpass Impact Study

*Young people's
personal development and
employability
and the recognition of youth
work*

European Commission

Youth in Action

Authors

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[1] SALTO stands for "Support for Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities". SALTO Resource Centres, which are teams of people attached to the Youth in Action National Agencies, provide e.g. training and publications for content related issues (such as youth participation or inclusion) or regarding geographic regions (such as Eastern Europe and Caucasus or EuroMed).

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Executive summary

- ## Project background

Youthpass is the European tool to improve the recognition of the learning outcomes of young people and youth workers/leaders from their participation in projects supported by the EU Youth in Action[2] Programme.

Youthpass consists of:

- Certificates that can be obtained by participants in several Actions and sub-Actions of the Youth in Action Programme;
- A defined process which supports young people, youth workers and youth organisations to reflect about the learning outcomes from a Youth in Action project.

Youthpass is also part of a broader European Commission strategy which aims to enhance the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and of youth work in Europe and beyond to facilitate a better match between skills and labour demand, promote the transferability of skills between companies and sectors and help citizens move around the EU to study and work[3].

The European Commission launched Youthpass in 2007. Since then, approximately 10,000 organisations issued more than 235,000 Youthpass certificates to young people and youth workers who had participated in over 20,000 projects.

In spring 2012, the European Commission invited two experts - Marti Taru and Paul Kloosterman - to carry out an impact study on Youthpass. The experts were supported by a Steering Group which included representatives of Youth in Action National Agencies, the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, the Youthpass Advisory Group, the European Training Strategy Steering Group, the European Youth Forum and the European Commission.

- ## Aim of the study and research questions

The main aim of the study was to assess the impact of Youthpass on the participants of the Youth in Action Programme and describe its role in:

- Supporting non-formal learning of individuals within the youth work sector;
- Documenting young people's and youth workers' learning processes and learning outcomes;
- Helping young people and youth workers to communicate obtained competences when undertaking further steps in their individual pathways, e.g. when applying for educational programmes or for a job.

When designing the study, experts put a specific focus on the following topics:

- Youthpass as a tool to increase young people's ownership of the learning process;

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[2] http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/overview_en.htm
[3] http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/informal_en.htm

- The improvement of learning processes through the use of the self-assessment feature of Youthpass;
- The ability of Youthpass users, both individuals and organisations, to better identify and describe learning outcomes;
- The influence of Youthpass on further education and employment by raising young people's self-confidence and other characteristics and skills which enable them to better participate in education and employment;
- Youthpass's influence on improving the quality of youth projects, on how organisations address learning processes and on including competence-development throughout project activities;
- The impact of Youthpass on the recognition of non-formal learning experiences in the recruitment and selection procedures used in the labour market and formal education sector;
- The quantitative use of Youthpass.

- **Methodology**

The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods. It is based on online surveys targeted towards:

- <u>Organisations</u> which had implemented Youthpass in Youth in Action projects between 2007 and 2011;
- <u>Participants</u> in these projects.

A total of 741 organisations and 1,143 project participants replied to the online survey. In both cases, the response rate was about 30% of all contacted organisations and project participants.

The surveys mainly included multiple choice questions with the possibility to add alternatives in case the answer was not provided within the choice. It also included an open question about respondents' awareness of examples of good practice concerning the use of Youthpass.

In addition to the online questionnaires:

- Seven <u>focus groups</u>[4] with youth workers and project leaders were organised by Youth in Action National Agencies, involving between four and nine participants each;
- Two National Agencies carried out <u>focus groups</u>[5] with five Youth in Action project participants each;
- Three <u>expert consultations</u> were held involving the European Youth Forum, Youthpass contact persons and the Youthpass Advisory Group. The expert consultations involved between six and eight participants each.

In total, this impact study is based on the feedback of nearly 2,000 respondents.

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[4] Focus groups with youth workers and project leaders were organised in: Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Malta and Romania.
[5] Focus groups organised in Malta and Finland.

• **Main conclusions and recommendations**

A general conclusion from the findings of the impact study is that respondents broadly appreciated Youthpass in its current setup. Approximately 80% of participants agreed that Youthpass helps to communicate the importance of non-formal learning and increases the usefulness of the project for participants.

Respondents saw Youthpass as fostering the individual recognition of non-formal and informal learning by offering support to project participants and organisers in releasing the full learning potential in international non-formal learning activities. They stated that Youthpass widens young people's and project organisers' understanding and competence of learning and broadens the view of what they learned during the project.

Between 50-80% of respondents think that Youthpass enhances chances of young people especially when they apply for a traineeship or internship, employment or further education. Between 70% and 80% of participants planned to use Youthpass when applying for a job. More than 40% of respondents saw the potential of using Youthpass when applying for higher education or setting up a business. In this context it is essential that Youthpass is perceived as fostering individuals' ability to communicate effectively what they have learned.

Organisation representatives tend to have higher expectations towards the value of Youthpass in enhancing young people's chances to succeed than young people themselves.

A relatively small number of organisations and participants are aware of young participants who actually used Youthpass. Providing more information about the actual use of Youthpass (e.g. case studies) could help increase the perceived relevance of Youthpass amongst young people.

Young people's appreciation of Youthpass's relevance to their chances in the labour market was reported to be greatest in the period immediately after the end of the project, and then reduced over time. Respondents would like Youthpass to be formally recognised by structures at national level in both the formal education sector and in the labour market.

Youthpass contributes to the social recognition of youth work. It helps to communicate the learning outcomes of non-formal learning through youth work. By influencing the ways how organisations reflect on the learning achieved in the projects, it has contributed to the quality of youth work in youth organisations and youth projects. Youthpass was seen as an important catalyst for discussions about the quality of youth work.

Four out of five respondents reported having received all necessary information and assistance to fill in Youthpass in a clear and understandable way; 87% of participant respondents said that they described skills and competences acquired during the project in the Youthpass certificate. The framework of the eight key competences was generally perceived as a useful tool to describe the projects' learning outcomes but appear at the same time as relatively abstract and complex. Participants in Youth in Action projects highlighted the need to receive guidance when filling in the Youthpass self-assessment.

In the light of the development of "Erasmus for All" (2014-2020), in particular the actions targeting youth, the following general principles would need to be adhered to in the further development of Youthpass:

- Continuous emphasis should be placed on the quality of Youthpass implementation in the new programme in order to pursue and strengthen its role in documenting the learning outcomes of youth work activities;
- The principles and unique features of Youthpass that have ensured its acceptance in the youth field should be maintained and strengthened further.

The main recommendations from the impact study for the Youthpass development include the following:

- Continuation of the development of Youthpass certificates and the technical tools for issuing them. This includes e.g. providing further information about the role of various stakeholders in the Youthpass process and the possibility to issue the certificates in retrospect; clear guidance and educational support for the users, including youth workers, mentors and participants, taking young people with fewer opportunities into specific consideration; the translation of Youthpass certificates and related documents into as many languages as appropriate; further technical development of the documents, including the possibility for a compact overview of the competences;
- Further measures to support the awareness, development and recognition of the learning value of youth work. This includes, among others, further developing the training strategy related to Youthpass and the on-going development and translations of educational support materials;
- Measures to link Youthpass closely to the individual, social, formal and political recognition of non-formal and informal learning and of youth work.

There is a perceived need to increase the awareness and acceptance of international youth work and of Youthpass among institutions and organisations from the formal education sector. Awareness of the complementary role of international youth work in educational pathways should be increased. Measures need to be taken to increase employers' awareness of learning which occurs in non-formal settings like youth projects and of Youthpass as a tool to document the corresponding learning outcomes.

Further research is recommended to shed more light into the specific role of Youthpass regarding young people with fewer opportunities, including, e.g. young people who drop out of school early.

Introduction

Youth in Action

Currently, the Youthpass certificate is used for projects supported by the European Union's Youth in Action programme for the period 2007-2013.

Youth in Action is a programme the European Union has set up to promote young people's[6] active citizenship in general and their European citizenship in particular. The Programme fosters mutual respect and understanding among young people in different countries and reinforces social cohesion in the EU. It contributes to the development of quality support systems for youth activities and enhances capabilities of civil society organisations in the youth field.

Each year, the Youth in Action programme involves around 200,000 young people and youth workers in non-formal learning activities such as European Voluntary Service, youth exchanges and training and networking projects.

The Youth in Action programme supports the "renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field"[7] which promotes a cross-sectoral approach to youth issues, for example, on young people's employability and their active involvement in society.

The programme also underpins the "Youth on the Move" flagship initiative of the EU 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth[8], putting young people at the centre of the EU's agenda to create an economy based on knowledge, innovation and high levels of education and skills.

Youthpass

Youthpass is part of the European Commission's strategy to foster the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

With the Youthpass certificate, participants of Youth in Action supported projects have the possibility to describe which project activities they took part in, which non-formal learning process they went through - facilitated by a support person - and which competences they have acquired in the project.

Youthpass puts the learning that occurs through youth projects into focus and emphasises the importance of reflecting on the learning outcomes. Youthpass aims to support the employability of young people and youth workers by highlighting the acquired key competences through a certificate.

Being a Europe-wide recognition instrument for non-formal learning in the youth field, Youthpass contributes to strengthening the social recognition of youth work.

The types of activity supported by the Youth in Action programme range from individual to group projects, and from local initiatives to global mobility projects.

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[6] Main target group of the Youth in Action Programme is young people aged between 13 and 30 years.
[7] http://ec.europa.eu/youth/pdf/doc1648_en.pdf
[8] http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

Youthpass exists for the following particular types of activities:

- Youth Exchanges;
- Youth Initiatives;
- Youth Democracy Projects;
- European Voluntary Service;
- Cooperation with the Neighbouring Countries of the European Union;
- Training and networking of those active in youth work and youth organisations;
- Partnerships;
- Meetings of young people and those responsible for youth policy.

The development of Youthpass began in spring 2005 under the Youth in Action programme's predecessor, the YOUTH programme, and it was launched in July 2007. Since then, increasing numbers of certificates have been issued each year, with more than 212,000 certificates issued by the end of 2012[9].

Currently, the main Youthpass website www.youthpass.eu is available in 25 languages, with sub-sections certificates for the different activities: Youth Exchanges (available in 11 languages[10]); European Voluntary Service (23 languages[11]); Youth Initiatives (17 languages[12]); training and networking projects (9 languages[13]).

Youthpass is being continuously further developed: for 2013, the aim is to pilot using Youthpass outside the Youth in Action programme.

The implementation of Youthpass is monitored through a range of statistical indicators and with help from Youth in Action National Agencies' contact persons who are responsible for implementing Youthpass at national level. A detailed overview of the history and current activities of Youthpass is provided in Annex 2.

Policy background of Youthpass and the Youthpass Impact study

In the European Union, the economic crisis has increased youth unemployment to unacceptably high levels. At the same time, high school drop-out rates reduce the boost that young people and economies need from education to stand up to internationally competitive markets. In this context, there is an increasing will to recognise the full range of an individual's knowledge, skills and competences – those acquired not only at school, university or other education and training institutions, but also outside the formal system – to release the full potential of young people and economies.

The EU Youth Strategy, launched in 2009[14], stressed the value of non-formal and informal learning to acquire cross-cutting skills and calls for a better recognition of skills acquired through non-formal education for young people.

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[9] Statistical overview of the programme obtained from SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre.

[10] Bulgarian, Croatian, English, French, German, Greek, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovenian and Turkish (Coming soon: Czech, Hungarian, Norwegian, Spanish and Swedish).

[11] Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, Flemish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish.

[12] Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, English, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish (Coming soon: Finnish and Icelandic).

[13] Bulgarian, English, French, German, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Slovenian, Spanish (Coming soon: Czech).

[14] http://ec.europa.eu/youth/pdf/doc1648_en.pdf

Under the Europe 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth launched in 2010, the EU emphasised the importance of skills development for the employability of young people. Youth on the Move, one of the flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, aims to enhance young people's education and employment, and underlines the value of non-formal education.

The Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning adopted in December 2012[15] invited Member States to set up arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning by 2018. It also invited them to promote the use of EU transparency tools such as Youthpass and Europass to help document the learning outcomes.

In 2012, the European Commission launched a major study on the value of youth work across the EU to gain further insight into the role of youth work for non-formal learning and its contribution to achieving the EU's objectives in the field of youth[16].

The policy significance of the Youthpass certificate and the processes related to it derive from the certificate's integration into the Youth in Action programme, which provides non-formal learning opportunities in the youth field.

At policy level, Youthpass is part of the framework for the recognition of non-formal learning, as a strategy to individually, socially, politically and formally recognise non-formal and informal learning, and as a practical tool and process for documenting and communicating what participants have learned in Youth in Action supported projects.

Besides Youthpass, a range of recognition tools have been developed at European level, such as: the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), which is mainly aimed at the transparency and mutual recognition of higher education; the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET); Europass and the European Skills Passport developed by the European Union; and the European Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers, developed by the Council of Europe.

Complementary to these instruments, Youthpass is the recognition tool for non-formal and informal learning within the European Union and for the wider group of countries which take part in the Youth in Action programme.

Both the Council of Europe and the European Union have highlighted the recognition of youth work and non-formal learning as one of their specific fields of action. The EU and the Council of Europe both emphasise the role of youth work in fostering young people's active involvement in society and in the labour market, especially in their common activities to develop the Pathways paper process with its revised Pathways paper II[17].

Both institutions see the main role of non-formal learning in providing young people, especially those with fewer opportunities, with additional support to personal development and integration into society. In this context, non-formal and informal learning needs to be made visible through the validation of non-formal and informal learning, and by ensuring that non-formal learning is recognised at social, political and individual level.

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[15] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:398:0001:0005:EN:PDF
[16] The study is expected to be published in autumn 2013.
[17] http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/news/news_188.html

Setup, rationale and goal of the study

The main aim of the study was to report on the impact that Youthpass has had on the participants of the Youth in Action Programme.

It describes Youthpass' performance as a tool to support non-formal learning at an individual level within a youth work setting, as a way to document learning process and learning outcomes and as a certificate to communicate obtained competences when undertaking further steps in individual's pathways, e.g. when applying for educational programmes or for a job.

When designing the study, the steering group focused on the following themes:

- Improvement of the learning process through the use of Youthpass' self-assessment features;
- Ability of Youthpass users, both individuals and organisations, to better identify and describe learning outcomes;
- Influence of Youthpass on further education and employment through raising young people's self-confidence and developing individual features which support participation in education and employment;
- Influence of Youthpass on the capacity to better communicate competences acquired in non-formal learning contexts;
- Influence of Youthpass on improving the quality of youth projects, on how organisations address learning processes and on competence-development throughout project activities;
- Influence of Youthpass on the recognition of non-formal learning experiences throughout the recruitment or selection procedures, by employers and formal education providers;
- The quantitative use of Youthpass.

The study brings together the opinions of Youth in Action project participants, youth workers and youth experts on the perceived impact of the Youthpass process and/or certificate, as well as offering some examples of such effects.

The report does not aim to provide causal links between the use of Youthpass and the quality of youth projects or young people's success on the labour market. Rather, the reader will get an overview of what different groups, whose members' backgrounds, expertise and viewpoints vary considerably, perceive as consequences of implementing the Youthpass process at organisations and using the Youthpass process within their organisations and certificate for project participants.

The results contain elements of both random and non-random sampling.

Method and data

The report is based on quantitative and qualitative research. It utilises four sources of data:

- Online survey among project participants;
- Online survey among organisation representatives;
- Focus groups;
- Consultation groups.

The surveys

Two surveys were implemented by the European Commission:

- An online questionnaire for project participants, which was open from 16 November to 17 December 2012. Invitations were sent to approximately 4,000 project participants in national languages;
- An online questionnaire for representatives of organisations, which was open from 24 September to 22 October 2012. Invitations were sent to approximately 2,700 organisations in English.

The questionnaires included sections on:

- Accessibility and user-friendliness of Youthpass;
- Youthpass as an instrument to support individual learning;
- Influence of using Youthpass certificate on employment and/or education;
- Youthpass as an instrument to improve the quality of youth work in a youth project;
- Social/organisational background of the respondents.

The surveys returned 1,143 responses from project participants (response rate 29%) and 741 responses from representatives of organisations (response rate 27%).

Focus- and expert consultation groups

In order to get a deeper and more flexible understanding of the ideas of the beneficiaries on Youthpass, interviews were also conducted with two different types of groups:

- Groups with youth workers and project participants (as users of the Youth in Action programme);
- Groups with representatives of other stakeholders.

In this report, group interviews with youth workers and project participants are called focus groups and group interviews with stakeholders are called expert consultation groups.

Nine focus groups were organised in different countries by the National Agencies of the Youth in Action programme:

- Seven of these focus groups (with 4 – 9 participants each) took place with youth workers and project leaders in Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Malta and Romania;
- Two of the focus groups were held with 5 Youth in Action project participants each in Malta and Finland.

Three expert consultation groups took place with experts in the field of European youth work:

- Contact persons responsible for Youthpass in the National Agencies (Vilnius, 10th October 2012, 8 people);

- Consultation group organised by the European Youth Forum during the Non-Formal Education Week in Brussels (Brussels, 24th October 2012, 6 people);
- Members of the Youthpass Advisory Group (Brussels, 6th December 2012, 6 people).

Description of survey samples

This section describes the samples in terms of age, sub-action and country. A more detailed description of the samples, including sampling procedures, is available in Annex 1.

Age
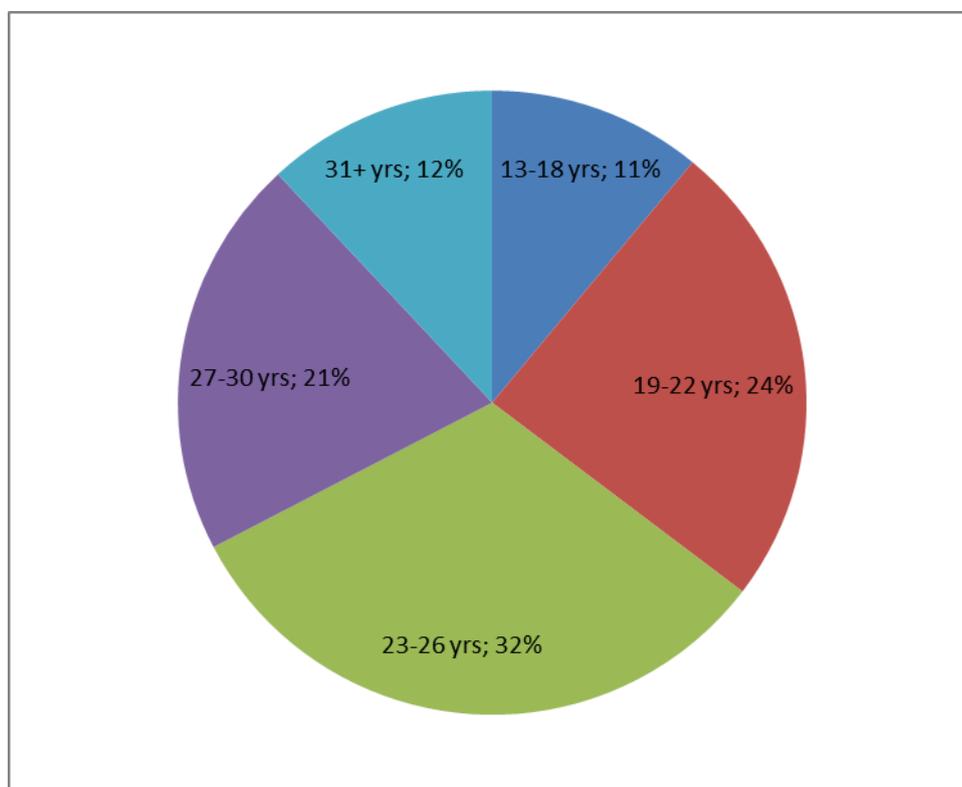
Graph 1. Participants' age distribution

Most of the project participants were in an age bracket where they could have finished their tertiary education to bachelor level (older than 22 years – 65%). A quarter of respondents (24%) were in an age bracket (19-22 years) where they could have finished secondary, vocational or post-secondary but not higher education. The smallest share (11%) was in the age group of primary or secondary level education (13-18 years old)[18].

Sub-action

In both questionnaires, participants and organisations' representatives were asked to indicate the sub-action of a Youth in Action project. If the organisation had run several

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[18] The relatively low percentage of the youngest age group was partly caused by the reluctance of organisations to share e-mail addresses of those under 18 years of age.

projects or a participant had taken part in more than one project, the respondent was asked to choose the one which had the most significant effect on them or which was most representative of the organisation. Only one sub-action could be chosen.
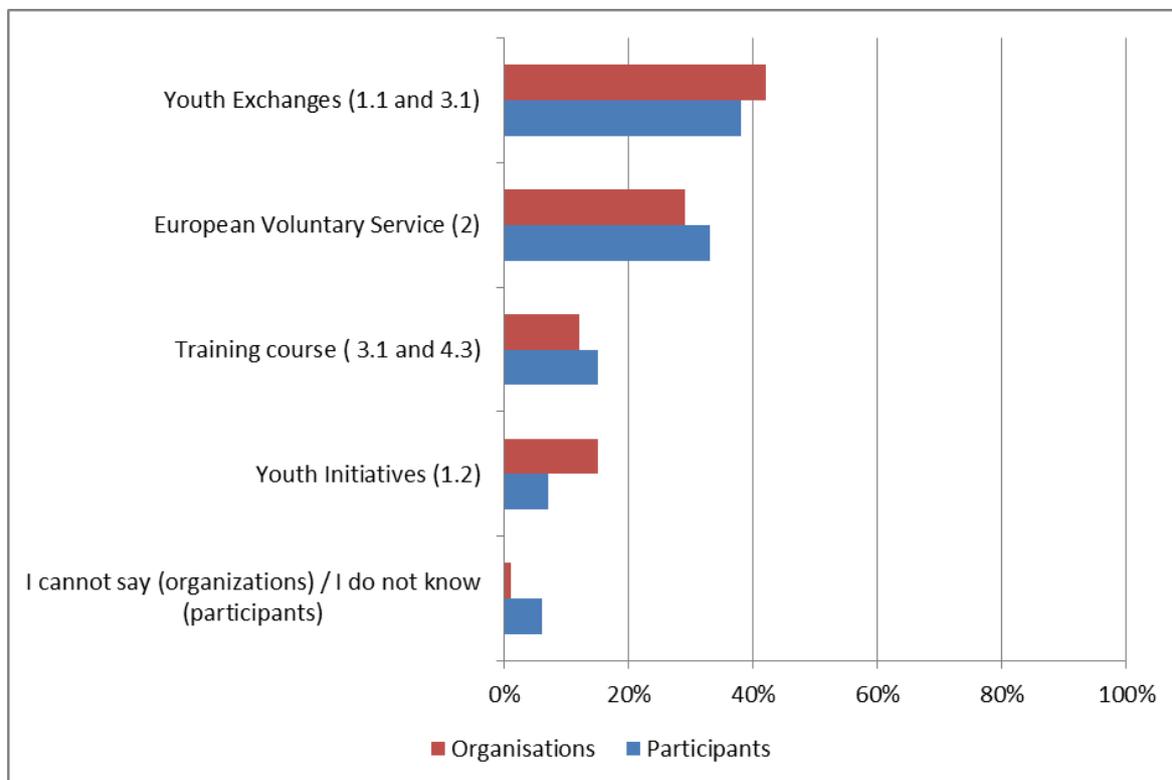
Graph 2. Sub-actions which supported projects that served as a basis to check responses to the questionnaires[19]

In both samples responses are dominated by experiences linked to Youth Exchanges (sub-actions 1.1 and 3.1) and European Voluntary Service (action 2). Importantly, the distribution of responses is fairly similar across the groups of participants and organisation representatives. Therefore there is no reason to say that responses are influenced by different sub-action profile. Both databases reveal a similar set of experiences.

Countries

Respondents to the surveys came from 41 (organisations' survey) or 52 (participants' survey) countries. In the organisations survey, 96% of responses came from Youth in Action programme countries[20]; in the participants' survey, the percentage was 74%.

Survey responses were dominated by a relatively small number of countries.

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[19] Question wording: Participants: Recently you took part in a project supported by the Youth in Action Programme. If you took part in more than one Youth in Action project, please focus only on the one that had the most significant impact on you, when replying to this questionnaire. Please choose the project type below: / Organisations: Please think of one project that you implemented and relate all your answers to subsequent questions to that project. Please choose the project that is most representative of your organisation. Under which sub-Action of the Youth in Action Programme did you receive support?
[20] 27 Member States of the European Union plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, Croatia and Turkey. http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/programme/who_participate_en.php

	Organisation representatives	Participants
Germany	9.6%	7.7%
Spain	7.1%	5.0%
France	5.9%	5.9%
Italy	9.5%	12.9%
Poland	6.2%	5.5%
Romania	8.1%	7.9%
Turkey	7.2%	4.0%
Total	54%	45%

Table 1. Countries which contributed most to the surveys (% of cases in sample)

The same seven countries were 'top countries' in the sense that in these countries also the highest numbers of Youthpass certificates were issued over the period 2007-2012[21]. Hence the survey samples cover countries with high numbers of organisations issuing Youthpass certificates and with high numbers of project participants who completed the Youthpass process.

The countries which do not appear in the table above contributed on average 1.3% of cases in the organisations' survey and 1.2% of cases in the participants' survey.

A note on statistical analysis and presentation of results

The report is written in a reader-friendly language, without assuming that the reader has statistical analysis background. Information on the methods used is given in the footnotes at the bottom of pages.

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[21] Information retrieved from SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre database.

Study results

Awareness of Youthpass

- Youthpass is mostly perceived as a certificate confirming participation in a project and describing the learning outcomes linked to it.

In the surveys, the awareness questions focused on the image of Youthpass among participants and organisations' representatives, not on being aware of the existence of Youthpass[22].

The underlying question was whether Youthpass was perceived as a certificate or rather as a tool that could be used in youth projects and that would improve the quality of learning in projects.

The graph below shows that organisation representatives and project participants had a roughly similar understanding of what Youthpass was.
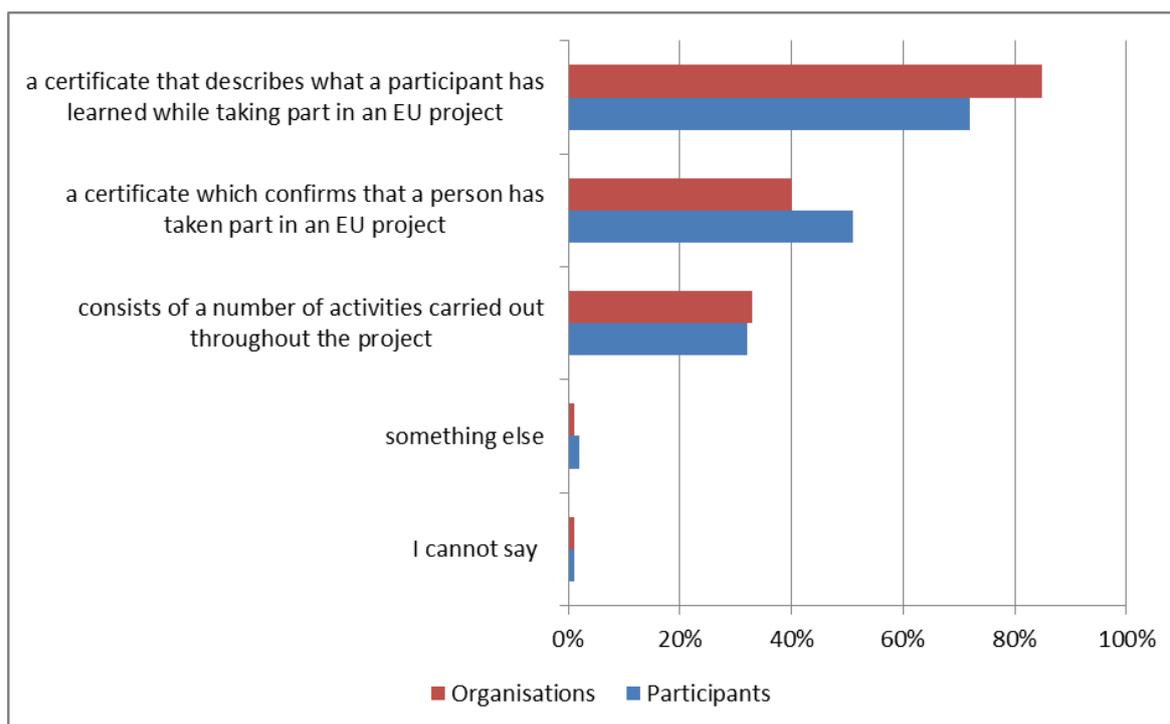
Graph 3. What is Youthpass?

In both groups, the most frequently chosen option was "Youthpass is a Certificate that describes what a participant has learned while taking part in an EU project", with more organisations choosing this option than participants.

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[22] Question wording: In your view, what is Youthpass? Please choose the two statements you consider most relevant.

Focus groups also revealed differences in perceptions of what Youthpass was. The general pattern was that the longer the activity (e.g. a year-long EVS), the more weight was given to the Youthpass certificate issued in connection with participation in the project. There was no significant correlation between time passed since the end of activities of a project and the perception of what Youthpass was.

The second most frequent response option in both groups was "Youthpass is a Certificate which confirms that a person has taken part in an EU project". This was more often chosen by participants, which could have been anticipated beforehand.

In third place was the response that Youthpass was a number of activities carried out throughout the project.

An open question was asked from respondents who ticked response option 'something else'. Twelve people entered free text to the questionnaire but without adding elements that were new in substance.

Results from focus group discussions highlighted the self-reflection fostered in the projects' learning process, with Youthpass recognised as an instrument supporting reflective and self-directed learning.

This finding emphasises the need to promote Youthpass as a tool which helps to increase the quality of learning during a youth project. In the focus groups with youth workers and project leaders, participants underlined the need to organise information sessions on Youthpass to become better aware of what it was. They confirmed that Youthpass was understood to be a valuable certification tool, listing the competences gained in a project and especially those not recognised in formal education.

The following table shows the relationship between sub-actions and perceptions of what Youthpass was.

	A certificate that describes what a participant has learned while taking part in an EU project	A certificate which confirms that a young person has taken part in an EU project	Number of activities carried out throughout a project	Something else
Youth Exchange (1.1 and 3.1)	72%	62%	28%	2%
Youth Initiative (1.2)	77%	60%	28%	2%
European Voluntary Service (2)	80%	48%	34%	1%
Training course (3.1 and 4.3)	78%	43%	41%	3%

Table 2. Perceived meaning of Youthpass, in categories of sub-actions (row %) - Participants*

*The sum of row percentages exceeds 100% because each respondent had the opportunity to check up to 3 responses.

The above table shows that each of the sub-actions does have a specific profile in terms of how respondents understood Youthpass:

- Participants in European Voluntary Service projects tended to choose that Youthpass was a certificate telling what a participant had learned;
- Training course participants tended to choose that Youthpass was a certificate telling what a participant had learned plus that it was a number of activities carried out throughout the project.

A similar pattern of responses occurred also amongst organisations' representatives, although the differences were less pronounced.

Information needed to fill out Youthpass

- Information received about Youthpass is generally considered to be clear and understandable.
- More specific information for less experienced young people or young people with fewer opportunities is needed.

Filling in the Youthpass certificate is supported by organisations which carry out Youth in Action funded projects.
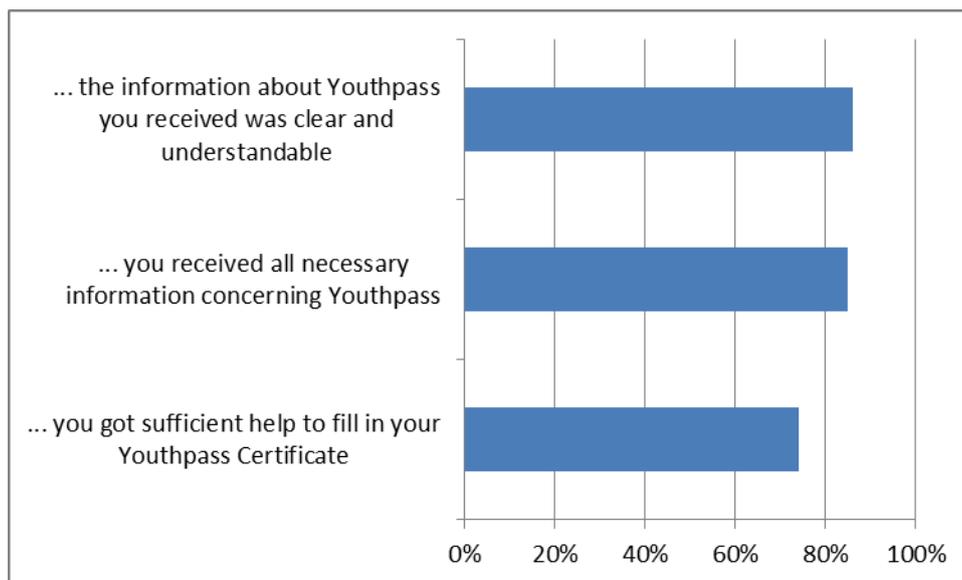
Graph 4. Percentage of participants who got sufficient information and assistance to fill out Youthpass certificate

According to the survey, approximately four out of five respondents did get all necessary, clear and understandable information and sufficient assistance to fill in the Youthpass certificate.

Responses to the three questions have statistically significant though moderate correlation with the number of earlier projects and level of education. Higher number of earlier projects or higher the level of obtained education was associated with higher likelihood that respondent gave responses agreeing to the three questions [23]. Similar

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[23] 'Agreeing responses' refers to summed percentage of response categories 'fully agree' and 'partially agree'.

correlations were observed also with age, but it was weaker and mostly insignificant. The fact that young people who had less experience or less education tended to disagree more leads to a consideration that some of them might need more assistance, more information and perhaps also a specific approach to fill out a Youthpass certificate.

The feedback from representatives of organisations was even more positive: approximately 90% of them said that Youthpass guidelines are easy to understand and helpful. This is relevant as the information on the Youthpass website is actually filled in by organisations[24].
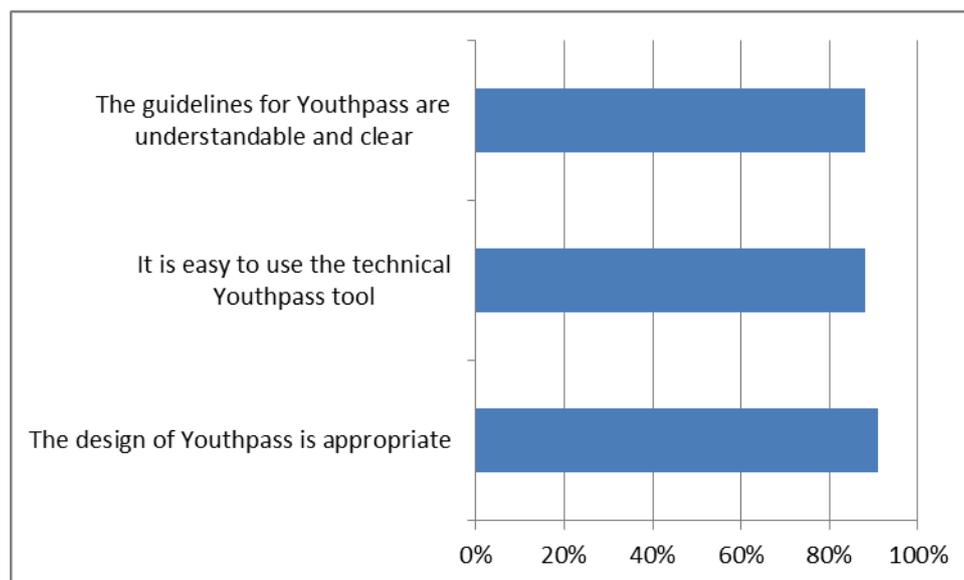
Graph 5. Organisations' representatives' agreeing opinions with some technical features of Youthpass

Youthpass certificate language

- Youthpass – more opportunities to fill it in in one's mother tongue.

The participants' survey revealed that 75% of participants had filled Youthpass not in their mother tongue but in a foreign language.
Some participants see Youthpass being filled in in a foreign language as an added value which contributes to showing their language competence. However, the introduction of further languages in Youthpass implementation should be discussed.

Youthpass certificate receivers' background

- 82% of respondents received a Youthpass certificate.
- More than 50% of respondents related their Youthpass experience to youth exchanges.

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[24] Since April 2012, participants can also access and edit their personal details for the Youthpass certificate upon the invitation from the organisation, but the responsibility to insert project data and to generate the certificates lies on the organisations only.

Project participants were asked to choose a response to the following question: Did you receive a Youthpass Certificate at the end of your project?

A positive answer was given by 80% of those who were aware of Youthpass and who were presented this question to answer.

Sub-action

The statistical overview of Youthpass certificates granted shows that a majority of them (53%) were issued to Youth Exchange participants, whilst 18% of certificates were issued for training and networking activities, which involve mainly youth workers and youth leaders. 10% were issued to participants in European Voluntary Service activities. Other sub-actions' participants received less than 10% of the total number of issued certificates.
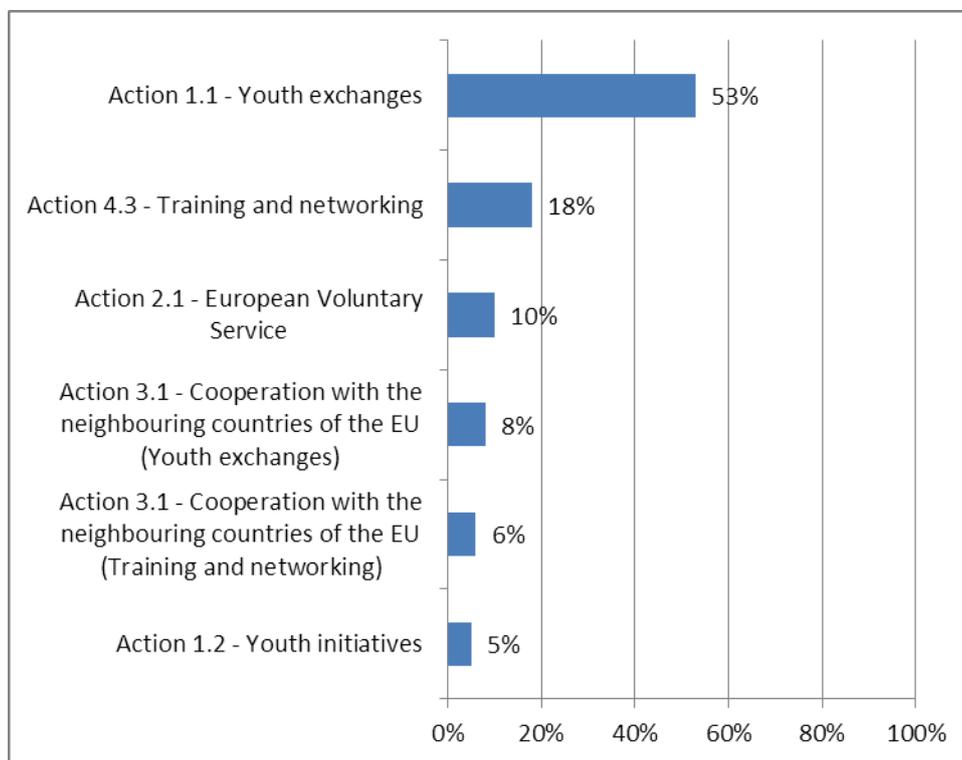
Graph 6. Percentages of Youthpass certificates issued to sub-actions 2007-2012[25]

[25] These percentages would need to be compared to the percentages of participants in Youth in Action projects within the same period, which was:

Action 1.1 – Youth exchanges:	49.5%
Action 4.3 – Training and networking:	11.5%
Action 2.1 – European Voluntary Service:	6.4%
Action 3.1 – Cooperation with the neighbouring countries of the EU:	17.0%
Action 1.2 – Youth Initiatives:	15.6%

Reasons for not having received the Youthpass certificate

- Respondents who had not received a Youthpass certificate explain that they had not been offered the Youthpass certificate by project leaders or, at the time of the project, did not believe that the Youthpass certificate was sufficiently recognised.
- However, 68% of respondents who had not received a Youthpass at the end of the project would like to receive Youthpass now.

Respondents who reported not having received a Youthpass certificate, were asked why they had not received the certificate[26].
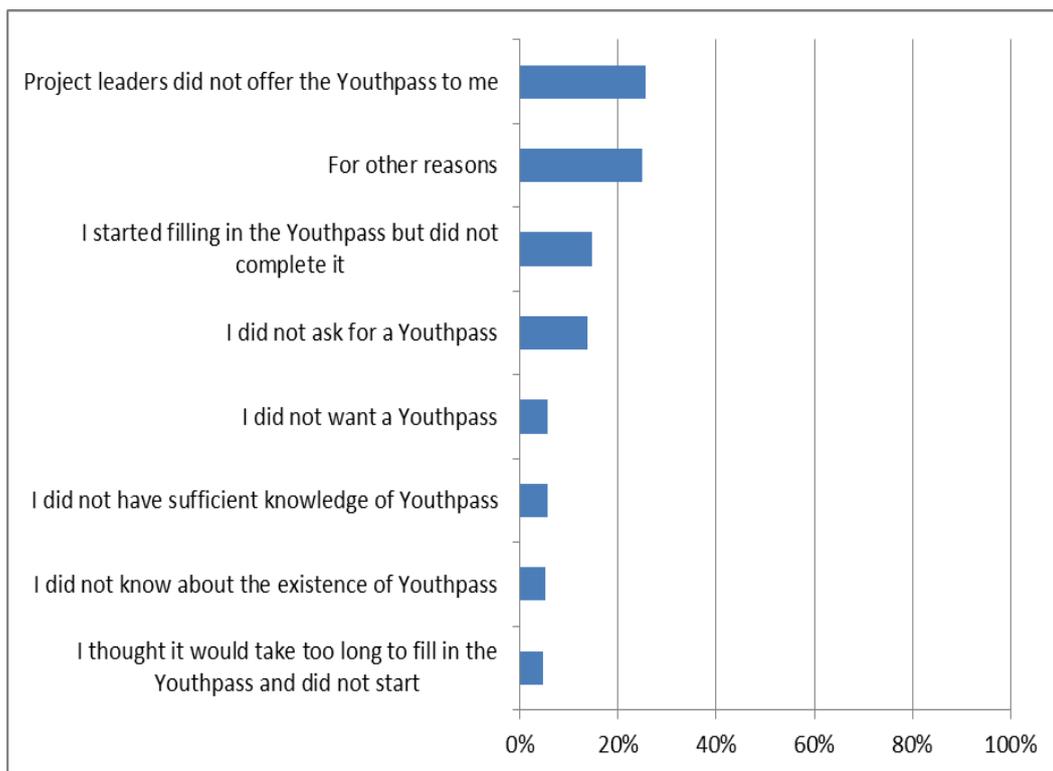
Graph 7. Reasons for not receiving a Youthpass certificate. Participants only

The two most frequent responses were that "project leaders did not offer Youthpass" and "other reasons". Other frequent responses were that respondent did not ask for Youthpass and that the respondent, who started filling in the Youthpass certificate, quit in the middle of the process.

Respondents who did not want or did not ask for a Youthpass certificate were asked for the reason for their abstention. The most frequent responses were related to attitudes/opinion related to the usability of the Youthpass certificate. Respondents doubted that institutions would recognise the certificate as a proof of skills or did not consider it useful at the time of the project. Replies to the open question confirmed this information.

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[26] Question wording: Why did you not receive the Youthpass Certificate?

"Would you now want Youthpass"?

The question was presented to those who said that they had not wanted, had not asked for or did not have sufficient knowledge of Youthpass. 68% of those who said they did not want Youthpass earlier said that they want Youthpass now. The finding that 68% would ask for Youthpass later signals that people who at first refused a Youthpass later started to believe it to be something of value.

Organisations and issuing Youthpass certificates

- The recognition of Youthpass still needs to be fostered further.

According to SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, the number of organisations which had issued Youthpass certificates was lower than the number of projects in which the Youthpass certificate was issued.
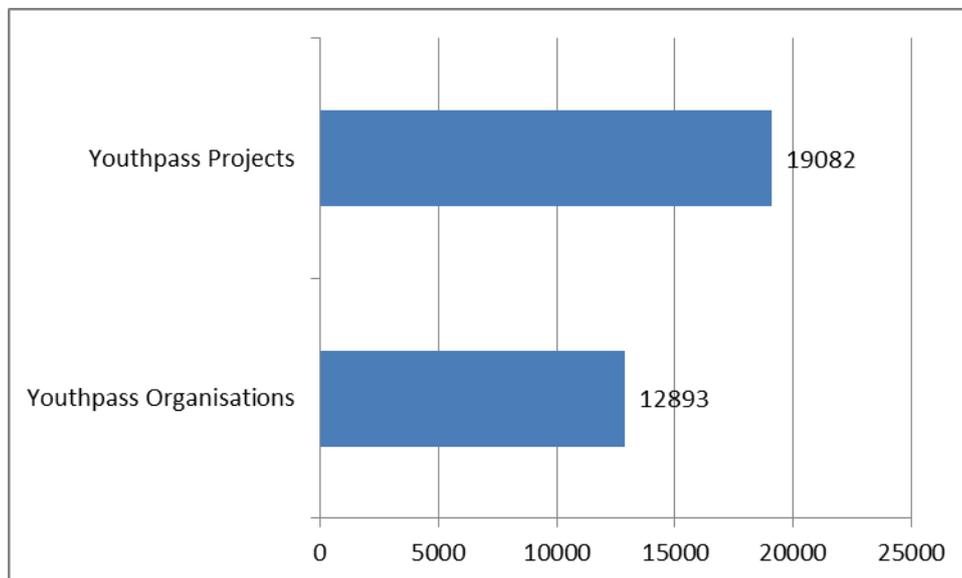
Graph 8. The number of Youthpass organisations and projects, 2007-2012

This means that in at least 6,189 projects (32% of all Youthpass projects) the Youthpass process was implemented by organisations which already had some experience with Youthpass.
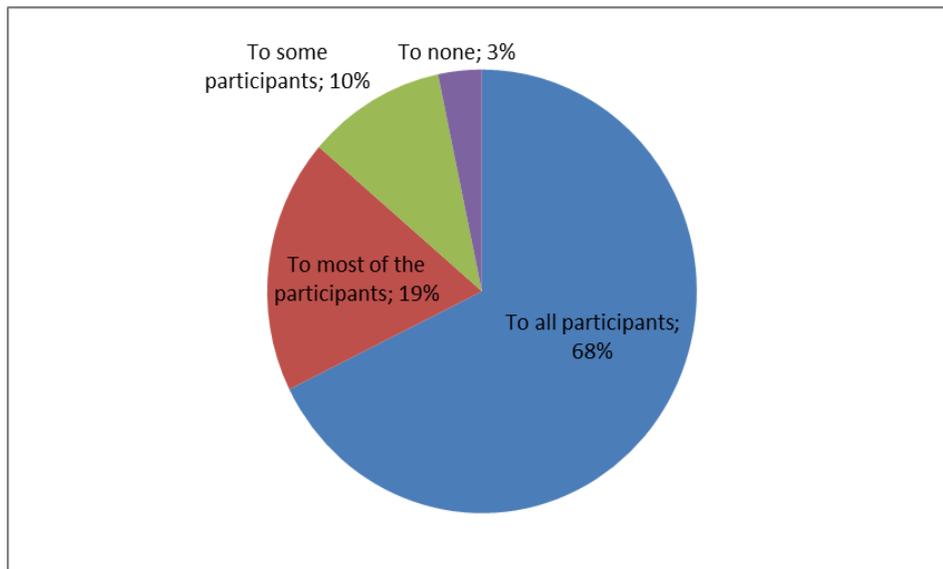
Graph 9. Percentage of project participants to whom a Youthpass certificate was issued by the organisation[27]

Of the organisations that responded, 87% said they did issue Youthpass to all or most of project participants. Only 3% of organisations said they did not issue Youthpass certificates at all.

There was a weak but significant correlation[28] between the percentage of volunteers in the organisation and the proportion of project participants to whom Youthpass was issued. Organisations with a lower percentage of volunteers in the organisation tended to report that Youthpass was issued to a relatively higher proportion of project participants.

The scope of activities[29] and the size of community [30] in which organisations operate seem to not have a significant impact on the proportion of project participants receiving a Youthpass Certificate.

Reasons for not issuing Youthpass

A question on reasons why an organisation did not issue Youthpass certificates was asked only from organisations which said they did not issue a single Youthpass certificate. The most frequent reason was that none of the participants asked for it. This reason was only on the 4th place in participants' questionnaire.

An interesting picture occurs when combining participants' and organisations' responses: Whilst in the participants' group, the most frequent reason mentioned for not having received Youthpass was that project leaders did not offer Youthpass, in the

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[27] Question wording: Please think of the project that you chose at the beginning of the questionnaire. Did your organisation issue Youthpass Certificates for the participants of the project?
[28] Pearson r=0,1.
[29] Question wording: Please indicate your organisation's main scope of activities: Local, Regional, National, European Union, European Union and neighbouring countries, International, I cannot say.
[30] Question wording: Your organisation is based in a community/village/town of ... more than 1,000,000 people, 100,000 to 1,000,000 people, 15,000 to 100,000 people, 3,000 to 15,000 people, 300 to 3,000 people, fewer than 300 people.

organisations' group the most frequent reason was exactly the opposite, i.e. lack of participants' interest.

Youthpass - an instrument for support of individual learning

- Both organisations and participants agree that Youthpass helps young people and youth workers to better understand learning processes, describe what they have learnt and become responsible for their own learning.
- The self-assessment part of Youthpass is considered to be challenging.

Focus groups with project leaders and youth workers expressed the opinion that filling out the Youthpass certificate self-evaluation part extended participants' understanding of what learning is about. Having had the experience of using the Youthpass, they recognised a much wider range of changes than they had understood before using the Youthpass. It challenged and widened the views that young people had on learning and helped them to become more responsible for their own learning. In that way it was an acknowledgement of self-directed learning.

In the organisations' representatives survey, respondents reported that using the eight key competences framework helped participants' to describe what they had learned[31] (85% agreed). A similar percentage agreed that the eight key competences framework helped participants to carry out self-assessment[32] (84%). In the participants' questionnaire, 87% said that they described skills and competences acquired during the project on the Youthpass certificate[33].

The self-assessment part of the Youthpass was seen as challenging by many focus group members. They underlined the need to give support to participants. Mentors/youth workers should assist in helping young people to understand the concept of the key-competences as well as in choosing the 'right' words to describe their learning and competences. Sometimes the complexity of the key-competences seemed to be a block for participants. Group members expressed the need for a better explanation of the key-competences for young people as well as for youth workers who are beginners in the programme.

In the case of training courses a specific aspect was brought up during the interviews; often participants do not fill in the self-assessment part of the Youthpass after the training course. They have the opportunity to do their self-assessment part after the training course, though. But once back home they forget, don't find the time etc.

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[31] Question wording: The section on the eight key competences helped participants to describe what they had learned in the project.
[32] Question wording: The section on the eight key competences helped participants to carry out their self-assessment.
[33] Question wording: Did you describe your skills and competences acquired during the project on the Youthpass Certificate?

The perception of participants and organisations' representatives of the effect of Youthpass on participants

Graph 10. Agreeing opinions on how Youthpass contributed to individual learning[34]

The first finding was that there is no substantive difference between participants' and organisations' responses to these four questions. The importance of all the themes is highlighted by the level of agreement which reached 80%-90% of responses.

Amongst representatives of organisations, approximately 90% agreed with the statements. Within participants, the percentage was slightly lower but still greater than 80%. Organisation representatives tend to be slightly more positive about the contribution of Youthpass to young people's individual learning development.

There was a weak but statistically significant correlation of responses to the four questions above with the educational levels of participants and the number of projects in which they had participated. Correlation shows that higher level of education and greater number of projects tended to be associated with a more positive evaluation of how Youthpass had helped participants to understand what they could get out of a project. The correlation was slightly stronger between the number of Youth in Action supported projects and the evaluation of Youthpass effects.

There was no difference between responses given by representatives of organisations which worked in the area of social inclusion[35] and the rest of organisations.

Participants' opinions on the immediate effects of Youthpass across sub-action type (Table 3) showed that EVS participants tended to agree to a lesser extent with the statements. Three out of the four differences were statistically significant (the first one

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[34] Question wording: Participants: As a result of the use of Youthpass in my project, ... / Organisations: As a result of the use of Youthpass in the project, ...

[35] Chose 'social inclusion' in the question: What is your organisation's main field of activity? Please choose a maximum of two.

was not).[36] Participants who chose other sub-actions tended to be more positive about possible effects of Youthpass on their awareness of learning.

	Youth exchange (1.1, 3.1)	Youth initiative (1.2)	EVS (2)	Training course (3.1, 4.3)
Awareness of what was learned	86%	88%	84%	95%
Awareness of what can be learned	86%	98%	76%	94%
Clearer understanding of skills needes	86%	94%	73%	90%
Capability to explain what was learned	87%	96%	83%	96%

Table 3. Project participants' agreeing opinions on immediate effects of Youthpass by sub-action type - Column %

In the focus groups, the boost in self-confidence of the young participants was seen as an important outcome of having their competences recognised. By being able to explain their competences, they saw their chances in future employment and education activities increasing.

The findings from the quantitative survey match well with the qualitative results. The consultation group interviews led to the conclusion that stakeholders consider project participants' ability to reflect on their learning and express on their learning outcomes as an essential element of Youthpass and the Youthpass process.

Consultation groups also expressed concerns that some young people experience difficulties with complex concepts like learning to learn and that they need guidance in managing the Youthpass process. The role of youth workers, trainers, mentors and coaches is seen as crucial for the facilitation of the learning process.

Employment and education

- Both organisations and participants were of the opinion that Youthpass enhances Youthpass recipients' chances to succeed when applying for a traineeship/internship, an apprenticeship/vocational training, a job or higher education.
- Representatives of organisations seem on average to be more confident about this than project participants.

Both participants and organisation representatives were asked to evaluate how the Youthpass certificate contributed to education and employment opportunities of young people.

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[36] Pearson chi-square statistic.
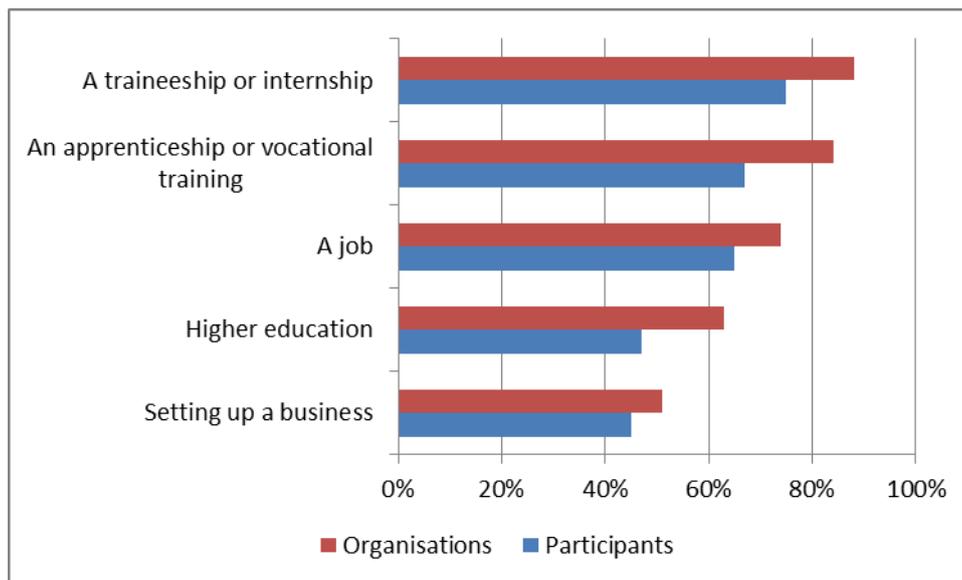
Graph 11. Youthpass enhances the chances to succeed when applying for …[37]

Both groups rated the options in the same order, with traineeship/internship and apprenticeship/vocational training as the most positive and setting up a business as the least positive. The contribution of Youthpass to finding a job was placed third, with a fairly equal distance from both ends. Differences between the top and the bottom ends of the ratings were quite notable, around 40 percentage points, which means that respondents held really differing viewpoints.

In general, there were no statistically significant differences, except on one question: organisations working in the field of 'social inclusion' agreed less with the statement that Youthpass helps young people to get an apprenticeship position or a place in vocational education. In general, organisations working in the field of 'social inclusion' tended to agree less with the statements.

An interesting pattern occurred: organisation representatives were more positive than participants about enhancing chances to succeed with Youthpass; the average difference was 12 percentage points (see graph 11). Further research would be needed to understand the reasons behind this difference.

Another significant finding was that there was a considerable number of participants who were unsure whether Youthpass could help to increase their chances to succeed in the abovementioned areas. The average proportion choosing response option 'I cannot say' across the five areas was 24%, with the highest of 33% when it came to assessing how Youthpass could support setting up a business. Representatives of organisations felt less uncertainty. Their average proportion choosing response option 'I cannot say' across the five areas was 16%, and as high as 27% when it came to assessing how Youthpass could support setting up a business.

In the organisations' representatives' survey, correlations between the time elapsed since the end of the project and the opinion whether Youthpass would enhance a participant's chance to succeed[38], help to communicate skills and competences[39], or

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[37] Question wording: Participants: Youthpass enhances my chances to succeed… / Organisations: Youthpass enhances the chances of young people to succeed...
[38] Question wording: Youthpass enhances the chances of young people to succeed...

whether the participants will present their Youthpass certificates in the future[40], were very weak and in most cases insignificant.

In the participants' survey, there was a strong correlation between the time elapsed since end of the project and the three questions. In the case of nearly all questions, correlations were statistically significant but relatively weak[41] (not significant for presenting Youthpass when applying for a job or higher education or setting up a business). It means that the more time had passed since the end of project, the less positive respondents were about how Youthpass could help them to find a job or further education opportunities. The survey does not answer why the correlation occurred; further research is needed to shed light on the causes of the relationship.

In two focus groups the self-assessment principle was mentioned as an element that had a negative influence on the recognition of Youthpass. In both groups self-assessment in itself was seen as a positive feature but it was perceived to be too 'fragile' when it came to external recognition. Self-assessment does help young people to reflect on and become more aware of their learning but it was questioned if employers would value the outcomes of self-assessment only. The impression of the participants was that people outside the non-formal learning world prefer to have an external assessment of what has been learnt.

Some focus group participants saw it as an important addition to young people's CVs because employers more and more recognise the value of skills obtained in youth work. These skills are seen as complementary to what is learned in school. The recognition of Youthpass is seen as very much linked to the recognition of non-formal learning. Until non-formal learning / youth work is recognised as something where young people can gain useful competences, the Youthpass will not be recognised. On the other hand, Youthpass can be a tool that helps to make employers more aware of the value of youth work.

The next question focused on assessing how Youthpass could help to communicate young people's skills and competences when applying for a job or further education. It covered five distinct activity areas[42].

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[39] Question wording: To what extent do you agree that the Youthpass approach will help participants in communicating their skills and competences when applying...

[40] Question wording: To what extent do you agree that participants will present their Youthpass Certificate when applying...

[41] Values of Pearson r varied between 0.2 and 0.3.

[42] Question wording: Participants: Youthpass will help me in communicating my skills and competences ... / Organisations: To what extent do you agree that the Youthpass approach will help participants in communicating their skills and competences when applying...
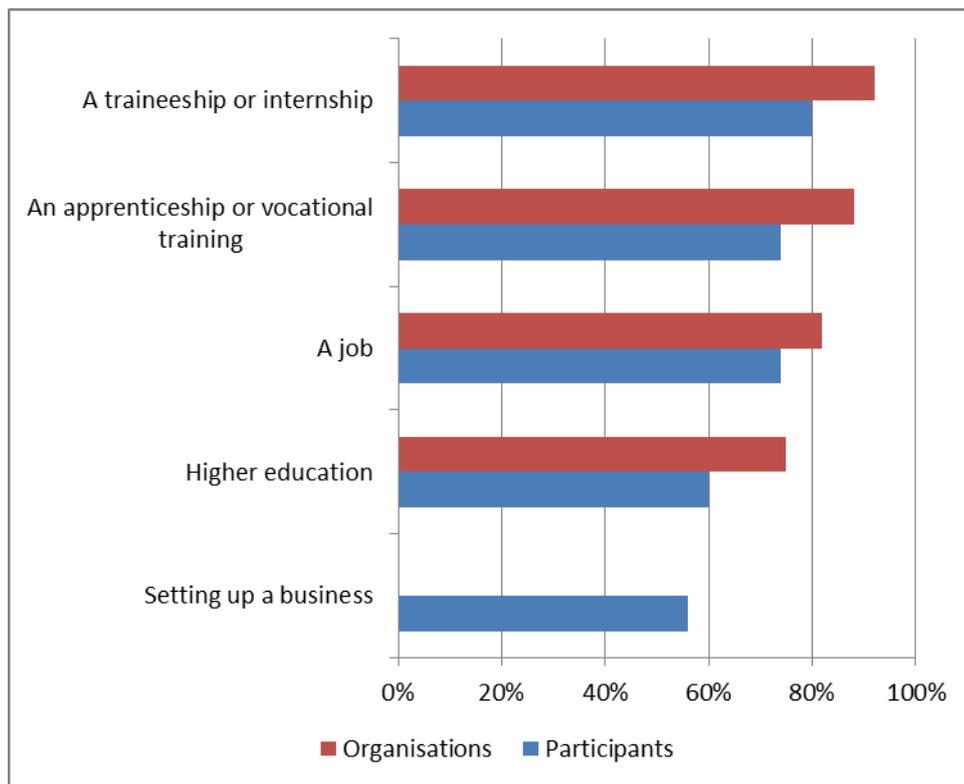
Graph 12. Youthpass helps to communicate competences when applying for …

First it is necessary to draw attention to the high percentages of agreement. Among organisations' representatives above 75% agreed to all statements. The percentage of participants agreeing was somewhat lower but still well above 50%, and also above 75% in the case of three options.

The findings were similar to those before: the most positive areas were internship and apprenticeship/vocational training, while the least positive area was setting up a business. Organisation representatives were more positive about the effects of Youthpass certificate.

The average percentage of 'Don't know' answers among participants was 19%, with 30% in the area of setting up a business. Among representatives of organisations, the percentage was 9% lower on average.

The survey results show that both representatives of organisations and project participants hold the opinion that Youthpass is most useful when applying for a traineeship or internship. It was considered less useful when applying for higher education or setting up one's own enterprise. However, the differences in estimates were not drastic.

Discussions in consultation groups give different impressions of what people thought of Youthpass. Recognition by employers and formal education was seen less important compared to the value of Youthpass as an instrument for self-recognition and describing one's own competences.

Usage of Youthpass certificate

- ▪ Youthpass was considered most useful when applying for a traineeship, internship or apprenticeship. Between 70% and 80% of participants planned to use Youthpass when applying for a job; a majority of respondents intended to use it when applying for higher education.

Both participants and organisation representatives were asked about their expectation to use a Youthpass certificate as well as about actual behaviour when applying for work or education.

First let us take a look at behavioural plans[43].

Graph 13. Will present Youthpass when applying for …

The findings are rather similar to those outlined previously. The use of Youthpass was considered most useful when applying for a traineeship, internship or apprenticeship. Between 70% and 80% of participants and organisation representatives considered using Youthpass when applying for a job and the majority of participants and organisation representatives intend to use Youthpass when applying for higher education.

Organisation representatives were more positive than participants. 'Don't know' responses were less frequent: among participants 9% on the average with 18% in the area of business, and 12% average among representatives of organisations.

When we compare participants' opinions by sub-action type (Table 4), we see that EVS participants tended to agree less with the statements made on the effects of Youthpass. The differences are statistically significant.[44] Participants who took part in other sub-actions tended to be more positive about possible effects of Youthpass on their future employment and education activities.

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[43] Question wording: Participants: Will you present your Youthpass Certificate.../ Organisations: To what extent do you agree that participants will present their Youthpass Certificate when applying...
[44] Pearson chi-square statistic.

		Youth Exchange (1.1, 3.1)	Youth initiative (1.2)	EVS (2)	Training course (3.1, 4.3)
Youthpass increases chances to succeed when applying for…	job	72%	70%	55%	69%
	traineeship	83%	81%	61%	84%
	apprenticeship	75%	68%	55%	73%
	higher education	54%	47%	36%	56%
	setting up business	57%	46%	26%	55%
Youthpass helps communicate skills when applying for…	job	79%	75%	65%	82%
	traineeship	83%	80%	72%	87%
	apprenticeship	76%	77%	66%	85%
	higher education	65%	64%	50%	68%
	setting up business	79%	83%	66%	76%
Plans to present Youthpass when applying for…	job	82%	90%	73%	87%
	traineeship	77%	85%	68%	82%
	apprenticeship	62%	65%	50%	63%
	higher education	51%	48%	34%	46%
	setting up business	71%	70%	55%	72%

Table 4. Project participants' agreeing opinions on effects of Youthpass by sub-action type - Column %

Further research would be needed to provide the reasons for the difference in opinions between EVS participants and others.

The number of people who have used the Youthpass certificate

Both project participants and organisations representatives were asked to indicate whether they knew people who have used the Youthpass certificate and how many such people they know[45].

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[45] Distinguishing between options 'cannot say' and 'do not know anyone' is a challenge since 'cannot say' may mean that 'I do not know anyone, maybe there are people out there who have used Youthpass'. This interpretation explains why the two categories - 'cannot say' and 'do not know anyone' – were merged into a single category.
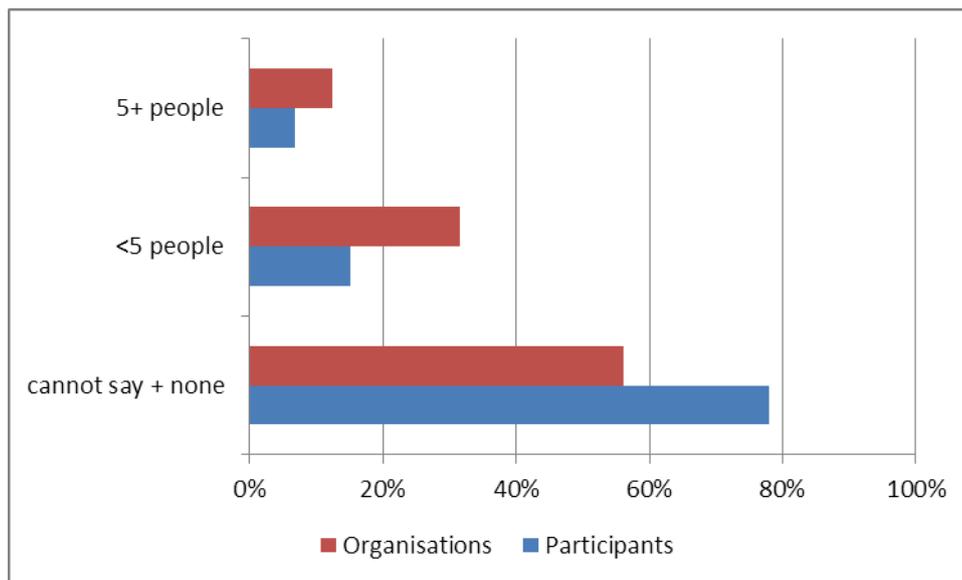
Graph 14. Percentage of respondents who reported they knew people who had used Youthpass as a reference[46]

Among representatives of organisations, a relatively high percentage of respondents reported that they knew people who had used Youthpass as a reference (44%). Among participants the share was half of that (22%).

Offering a valid explanation to this finding would require further research. One hypothesis could be that organisers have information about a larger group of young people, which is reflected in the responses.

This study does not provide information on how many Youthpass holders have used Youthpass and how many times and in what situations. It only informs about the number of respondents who reported that they knew someone who had used Youthpass. Among participants, the total percentage of people saying that they did not know anyone who had used Youthpass certificate was 78%; among organisations' representatives it was 56%.

Respondents who reported knowing a higher number of people having used Youthpass, tended also to be more positive about using it, and held more positive views on the effects of Youthpass[47].

Amongst participants, there was a strong correlation between the number of international projects and Youth in Action supported projects a participant had participated in, and the number of Youthpass users he or she knew; those with more experience in projects also tended to know a higher number of Youthpass users[48].

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[46] Question wording: Participants: Do you know any project participants who have used Youthpass as a reference when applying for jobs and/or further education? / Organisations: Do you personally know any young person who used the Youthpass Certificate when applying for a job, higher education, traineeship, apprenticeship or vocational training?
[47] In the participants' datafile Pearson r varied between -0.4 and -0.6, in the organisation representatives' datafile Person r varied between -0.2 and -0.5.
[48] Pearson r=0.4, 0.5.

There was also a significant correlation with settlement size; a higher number of Youthpass users was reported by representatives of organisations located in large cities[49].

Correlations with age and the highest level of education obtained were positive too but not significant. It needs to be taken into account that only 4.8% of the total sample checked the response to that question.

Among representatives of organisations, there was a statistically significant correlation between the number of reported Youthpass certificate users and the number of volunteers working in the organisation[50]. A higher number of Youthpass certificate users was reported by representatives of organisations with many volunteers. There was no correlation with settlement size.

In focus and consultation groups, participants mentioned the lack of awareness of Youthpass among employers and the formal education system. Both non-formal education and Youthpass need to be made better known outside the youth work environment. Some stakeholders mention that in their countries employment agencies and employers recognise Youthpass.

Recognition by employers and the education system is of crucial importance for the further development of Youthpass. More adequate insight into and a more detailed overview of the actual opinions of employers and formal education system representatives is necessary to assess the current situation and plan further steps. It might be necessary to carry out a specific study focusing on this stakeholder group to understand their perception of Youthpass[51].

Youthpass as an instrument to improve quality and recognition of youth work

- Organisation representatives appreciate the effects of Youthpass on the quality of youth work. They agree that Youthpass contributes to the quality of projects and to making organisations better aware of new methods.
- More than 80% of participants agree that Youthpass helps to communicate the importance of non-formal learning and increases awareness of participants, trainers and organisers about what the main achievements of projects are.
- Training of youth workers and trainers on Youthpass is considered an essential element to ensure the quality of the Youthpass process.

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[49] Pearson r=0.3.
[50] Pearson r=0.2.
[51] The "Study on the impact of Non-Formal Education in youth organisations on young people's employability", commissioned by the European Youth Forum, states that employers mention that young people lack to some extent the skills of providing detailed information on what they learned in youth organisations. Increasing these skills could help young people increase their employability. And certificates like Youthpass are helpful to present their engagement and outcomes.
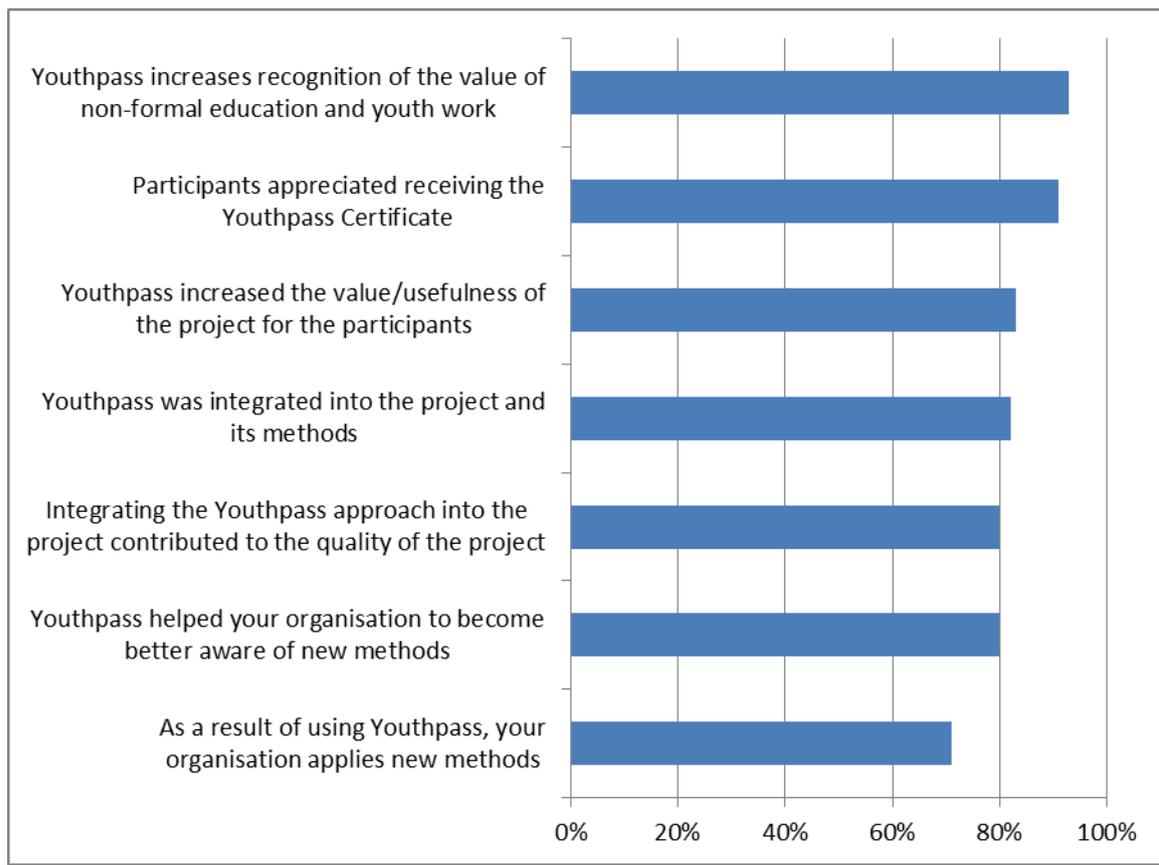
Graph 15. Organisations' agreement with the statements about effects of Youthpass on youth work

Focus groups appreciated the time allocated to the reflection on and evaluation of the projects' learning elements as part of the Youthpass process. Youthpass provides a framework which helps to structure thinking about the learning process. Trainers, mentors and youth workers become more aware of what and how participants learn. With regard to EVS, the Youthpass process was seen as part of the support provided to the volunteers. The dialogue process – a new element even for some of the youth workers - increases the quality of the reflection.

Responses to the questions were mostly not correlated with settlement size, share of volunteers, or scope of activities. The following correlations were statistically significant but these were also very weak[52]:

- Organisations with volunteers and those with a more local scope tended to agree with the statement that Youthpass helped the organisation to become better aware of new methods to work with young people.
- Organisations with more local scope tended to agree with the statement that Youthpass helped increase the recognition of youth work.

Project participants were given a different set of questions to respond to. Nevertheless, the general level of agreement with the statements was similar to that of organisations' representatives.

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[52] All had Pearson r=0.1.
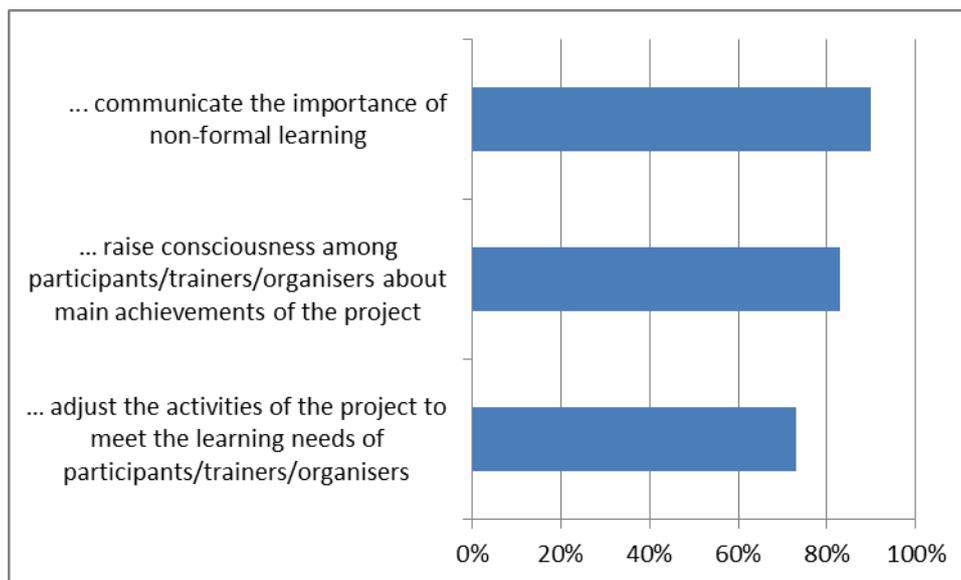
Graph 16. Percentage of participants who agree that using Youthpass helped to ...

There were no large differences across questions, with all three statements receiving a high percentage of agreement. Participants tended to agree most with the statement that Youthpass helped to communicate the importance of non-formal learning and least with the statement that Youthpass helped to adjust the activities of the project. Both surveys show more agreement on the impact of Youthpass on communicating the importance of youth work and less agreement with the statement that Youthpass influences activities of a project or organisation.

In consultation groups a similar standpoint was expressed: Youthpass was seen as an important instrument to recognise learning outcomes in non-formal learning and as an improvement compared to the previous situation. It has become a kind of symbol for the promotion of non-formal learning as an instrument to make people (re)think about what non-formal learning means. In general, Youthpass was seen as an important catalyst for discussions about the quality of youth work.

Focus groups saw the training of youth workers, coaches, trainers and mentors as a crucial element for the quality of the implementation of Youthpass. It was expressed that youth workers participating in a Youthpass training course really benefitted from the courses and seminars. The lack of capability of youth workers to support learning and self-assessment was mentioned as a problem.

Suggestions for further development of Youthpass obtained from focus and expert consultation groups

Discussions in the focus and expert consultation groups produced a number of ideas and suggestions which could be considered as possible ways to develop the Youthpass further:

<u>Youthpass online</u>

Consultation and focus groups argued for an online-version of Youthpass where people could add to and adjust their Youthpass over time. It would be interesting to have an updatable Youthpass where learners can renew the competences gained during a specific activity or where they can update learning outcomes at a later time.

<u>Self-assessment part</u>

Focus groups of youth workers and young people expressed the opinion that the self-assessment part of the Youthpass could be further developed in order to overcome the complexity they see there for some people.

Proposals were to:

- Develop a set of pre-defined learning outcomes that can be chosen by participants;
- Have two parts of the self-assessment: one longer version related to the more personal aspects of development and another shorter version for communication to employers, educational institutions or other stakeholders;
- Be more clear about key competences and develop guiding questions for every key-competence to help young people fill in the Youthpass certificate;
- Complement the eight key competences framework with other concepts to help participants do their self-assessment;
- Improve in general support to young people and develop support materials to train youth workers to assist young people.

<u>Promotion of Youthpass</u>

Promotion was repeatedly mentioned as a necessary step for increasing recognition of Youthpass.

Recommendations are:

- Better target promotion, for instance by promoting Youthpass in schools;
- Organise training courses for employers to inform them about the value of Youthpass;
- Invite the European Commission to develop information materials and recommendations for employers regarding Youthpass;
- Call on Youth in Action National Agencies and other institutions to join forces to promote Youthpass;
- Target specifically those organisations which are not yet aware of Youthpass;
- Make Youthpass related publications and outcomes more easily accessible and visible to wider audiences.

Language

In some focus groups, language came up as a topic. Participants should be given the opportunity to fill in their Youthpass certificate in their own language. The Youthpass website should be made available in all languages of the Youth in Action programme and neighbouring countries.

Consultation groups voiced the opinion that Youthpass publications should be translated into more languages.

Further training

The need to organise training courses for youth workers, mentors, coaches and trainers was expressed both in focus and consultation groups.

Proposals are to

- Introduce starter level training courses for people who are new in the international field for them to understand the concept of Youthpass and the eight key-competences framework;
- Widen the range of training courses aimed at facilitating learning processes and self-assessment by young people;
- Support Youth in Action National Agencies to develop one-day training courses.

Informal groups

Both focus groups and consultation groups mentioned the need to pay special attention to informal groups/youth initiatives. They mentioned there was a need for training of support persons and targeted publications.

Main findings

The Youthpass Impact Study highlights the significance of self-reflection in the learning process. Youthpass is perceived as an instrument fostering reflective learning and self-directed learning.

Around 80% to 90% of project participants and organisations' representatives thought that Youthpass helps project participants to understand and explain others what they learned in the project they participated in. There was no difference between responses given by representatives of organisations which worked in the area of social inclusion and other organisations.

Both types of discussion groups expressed the opinion that the main value of Youthpass is that it supports learning in projects. Youthpass makes a person reflect on learning and its main value is in that it is a self-assessment tool. The groups also noted that although the eight key-competences framework was useful for supporting reflection, it may also be considered as abstract and complex by participants. The groups saw the need that youth leaders and youth worker provide assistance to project participants in this respect. In particular, young people with less education need special support.

Approximately 80% of respondents stated that they received sufficient and adequate support for filling in the Youthpass certificate. Approximately 90% of organisations' representatives said that Youthpass guidelines were easy to understand and helpful for filling in the certificate.

Approximately 80% of the participants that responded to the questionnaire had received the Youthpass certificate. 61% had taken part in a Youth Exchange (sub-actions 1.1 and 3.1); 18% in Training and Networking; 10% in EVS.

Two thirds of organisations reported that they had issued Youthpass certificates to all project participants, with 19% stating that the certificate was issued to most of participants. The most frequent reason for not issuing the certificate was that none of the participants wanted it. The main reasons for not receiving Youthpass given by participants were that Youthpass was not offered to them, they did not ask for it and that they had quit whilst filling it. The surveys indicate that there are divergent views among participants and representatives of organisations on the responsibility for not receiving a Youthpass certificate.

Two thirds of respondents who did not want the Youthpass certificate at the end of the project would like to obtain one now.

Among those organisations' representatives that reported that participants did not wish to receive Youthpass (3% of the respondents), the highest percentage was of the opinion that participants did not want the Youthpass certificate because young people did not need this kind of certificate, and that it was not sufficiently recognised by employers and the formal education system.

However, approximately 80% of respondents held opinion that Youthpass would enhance participants' chances to succeed when applying for a traineeship or internship. A slightly lower percentage agreed that Youthpass would enhance chances to succeed when applying for apprenticeship or vocational training. Approximately 70% think that Youthpass would help to succeed when applying for a job. A somewhat

lesser percentage agreed that Youthpass would enhance participants' chances to succeed when applying for higher education and starting up a business. Roughly similar opinions were expressed on the theme that Youthpass helps to communicate competences as well as when indicating plans to present Youthpass certificate when applying to the aforementioned institutions or posts.

The participants' survey shows that the more time elapsed since the end of the project the less confident participants were that a Youthpass would help them find a job or increase education opportunities.

The percentage of respondents who knew someone who had used Youthpass was nearly 50% among organisations' representatives and over 20% amongst participants. Amongst organisations' representatives the opinion that using Youthpass contributes to the development of youth work in their organisation was wide-spread, with the percentage of those agreeing with its positive impact between 70 and 80%.

More than 80% of participants and organisations' representatives agreed that Youthpass helps to communicate the importance of non-formal learning. It helps raising awareness of the main project outcomes and is considered as a tool to increase the value/usefulness of the project for the participants.

Youthpass was generally considered a process within the project that contributes to its quality. The process made many organisations (about 80%) aware of new learning methods and encouraged them to also apply these methods (about 70%).

The survey revealed that 75% of participants filled in the Youthpass certificate in a language which was not their mother tongue.

Because of methodological limitations, the study was not able to investigate the specific usefulness of Youthpass for young people with fewer opportunities.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

A general conclusion from the findings of the impact study is that Youthpass implementation is well on track. Increasing user numbers show that Youthpass is an instrument which is broadly accepted in the youth field and has contributed to the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and youth work in various ways.

<u>Youthpass has contributed to the individual recognition of non-formal and informal learning</u> by offering support to practises within international mobility projects, which support participants and organisers in realising the full learning potential of the activities and the individuals.

The outcomes of the study show that Youthpass is valued mostly - both by participants and organisers of Youth in Action projects - for being an instrument to:

- Become more aware of and increase the learning outcomes in Youth in Action projects;
- Enhance the ability of individuals to communicate effectively what they have learned.

In the long run, these effects will contribute to the successful lifelong and life wide learning paths of young people and youth workers. It can be assumed that the individual recognition by a person, being aware of his/her learning process and outcomes, contributes to a wider, general recognition of non-formal learning. This is expected to lead to better employability chances for young people and youth workers.

Participants consider Youthpass as a useful tool when applying for jobs, traineeships, and in the formal education pathways. However, they would like Youthpass to be more formally recognised by national systems, institutions or organisations in the formal education field and in the labour market.

<u>Youthpass has enhanced the social recognition of youth work</u>. It has increased the individually perceived value of projects for participants, made the learning effects of youth work better visible and helped to communicate the outcomes and importance of non-formal learning in youth work. Through influencing the ways how organisations approach the reflection on learning in the projects, it has contributed to the development of the quality of the work in youth organisations.

The SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre and other Youthpass stakeholders have contributed to making Youthpass influence the political recognition of youth work especially at European level when it comes e.g. to the current discussions about the next programme generation 2014-2020 or the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

The work of SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre has also contributed to the formal recognition of non-formal and informal learning by providing tools and support materials to further develop concepts around validation procedures.

Recommendations

Youthpass has been developed following a number of implementation principles and unique features that have ensured the quality of the Youthpass implementation, and enabled it to become accepted in the youth field.

- The characteristics of Youthpass closely follow the general principles of non-formal learning and respect the distinctive integrity of youth work. It is a voluntary tool and emphasises the learner-centred approach to learning processes and outcomes. Important aspects of Youthpass are guidance for participants which is ensured via the dialogue process involved, with specific attention on young people with fewer opportunities;
- The full utilisation of Youthpass as a documentation of learning outcomes is closely connected to the so-called Youthpass process – a set of activities implemented throughout the project to ensure continuous attention to learning;
- To reach the description of learning outcomes, self-assessment is being used. That enables the users to better become aware of their learning results and potential, as well as to better understand the different ways and contexts in which people learn, thus contributing to young people's learning-to-learn competence;
- The European reference framework of the eight key competences for lifelong learning provides a possibility to structure the learning outcomes description on the certificate. It is flexible enough to encompass the various learning outcomes from the very diverse youth work contexts.

Considering that Youthpass is the only European recognition instrument with a specific focus on young people, the specificities of youth work and the projects supported by the European Youth in Action programme, then measures need to be taken to develop it further. The following general principles need to be adhered to in the development of Youthpass:

- The framework of the new youth programme (2014-2020), especially the actions targeting youth, needs to be considered carefully when developing Youthpass further for the coming years;
- A high use of Youthpass throughout the different actions of the new programme should be aimed at;
- Further emphasis should be placed on the quality of the Youthpass implementation in order to pursue and strengthen its ability to document the learning outcomes of youth work activities;
- The principles and unique features of Youthpass that have contributed to its current success have to be maintained and strengthened.

The main areas of work during the next programme development for 2014-2020 should be the following:

- The further improvement of the Youthpass instruments, namely the certificates and the technical tools for issuing them;
- Further measures to support the awareness, development and recognition of the contribution of youth work to learning;

- Link Youthpass closely to developments around individual, social, formal and political recognition of non-formal and informal learning and of youth work.

The recommendations regarding <u>the further implementation and development of the Youthpass tool</u> include the following:

- Information should be spread more widely to participants of youth activities that they are entitled to receive Youthpass in retrospect if for any reasons they didn't receive it soon after the project. At the same time, organisations have to be provided with ideas how to handle the work this entails;
- It is necessary to further explain the concepts of Youthpass to participants and organisations;
- More participant-suited support should be provided when it comes to self-assessment, but also when the learning outcomes should be assessed by others;
- The role of mentors within the European Voluntary Service should be strengthened by more support through the National Agencies;
- The online tool for Youthpass on www.youthpass.eu should be developed towards a more interactive tool also for participants;
- The possibility to demonstrate a more compact overview of competences acquired from youth work activities should be developed;
- Further translations of the certificates, website and support materials should be encouraged to promote the use of Youthpass certificates in the various national languages of Europe.

Concerning the <u>recognition of the learning value of youth work</u>, appropriate measures should be developed - for example on-going development and translations of support materials - that reinforce the quality of projects with regard to their learning potential. The training strategy of Youthpass should be developed further to support the quality implementation of Youthpass and to equip youth workers with competences to support self-directed learning and self-assessment and assessment concepts and practise.

To link Youthpass better with <u>the development of strategies around the different aspects of recognition</u>, the diverse youth work, political and educational systems at European, national, regional and local level need to continue to be considered and respected. There is a need to increase the awareness and acceptance of Youthpass among institutions and organisations from the formal education sector (vocational training, higher education) but also to raise the knowledge and experience about the complementary position of international youth work in educational pathways. This will also lead to a better and wider understanding of how non-formal and informal learning can be validated, which is the core initiative in the framework of the Council Recommendation on validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012).

There is also a need to increase the awareness and acceptance of Youthpass amongst employers and therefore to show the potential of international non-formal learning mobility in gaining skills and competences needed for the labour market. This strategy will only succeed if young people are also encouraged and equipped with competences to better communicate their learning outcomes from non-formal and informal learning experiences.

The further implementation of Youthpass as a tool, process, and strategy responds to the invitation to enhance recognition of youth work and of non-formal and informal

learning, as elaborated in the *2010 EU Council Resolution on youth work*[53] and in the Commission Communication *"An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering. A renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities*[54]*.* Additionally, it contributes to the implementation of the *Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning* (2012)[55].

The further development of Youthpass also connects to the *Council conclusions on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people*[56] which considers it a priority to determine and recognise the personal, social and professional skills and competences deriving from young people's participation in youth work, and invites the EU Member States and the European Commission to facilitate, improve and promote the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning at national and EU levels.

As the final point, we recommend implementing further research on:

- The impact of Youthpass on projects and individual learning processes;
- The use of the Youthpass process within a short term (Youth exchange) and a long term project (European Voluntary service) with regard to its impact on learning outcomes;
- The use of Youthpass when applying for a traineeship, a job or for formal education (schools, universities);
- The use of the Youthpass process and certificate and its impact on young people with fewer opportunities;
- Country differences in terms of recognition and Youthpass.

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[53] http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/117874.pdf
[54] http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/youth-investing-and-empowering_en.htm
[55] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:398:0001:0005:EN:PDF
[56] http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/137148.pdf

Annex 1 - Description of the sampling procedures and samples

Sampling procedures

Organisations' representatives and project participants were recruited according to the following procedure.

Step 1: Definition of populations of interest

- All organisations which had issued Youthpass certificates;
- All young people who had participated in projects which had issued Youthpass certificates to participants.

Step 2: Definition of sampling frames

- Organisations listed in the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre database;
- Contacts of young people who had participated in projects. Contact data of participants were provided by organisations who had implemented projects which issued Youthpass certificates.

In principle, the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre database contains all organisations which had issued Youthpass certificates. The total number of organisations enlisted in the database was approximately 12,000. An equally comprehensive and centrally maintained list of participants in the projects is not accessible due to data protection issues. The contact information of participants is known only to project organisers.

Step 3: Drawing a random sample from the list of all organisations that had issued Youthpass certificates. The number of selected organisations was 2,700.

Step 4: Organisations provide contact lists of young people who had participated in a project where Youthpass certificates were issued[57]. The number of contacts provided was approximately 4,000.

Step 5: Representatives of the organisations and project participants are sent invitations to fill out the survey questionnaires. Filling out the questionnaires was voluntary.

Description of samples

Settlement size

Participants' and organisations' representatives' background in terms of settlement size is similar. Most of responses come from people living and working in large settlements. More than half of responses come from settlements with more than 100,000 inhabitants; approximately one third of responses are received from

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[57] Part of the organisations did not send contacts of participants of age younger than 18 years.

settlements with 3,000 and 100,000 people and only a bit more than one tenth from settlements with less than 3,000 inhabitants.
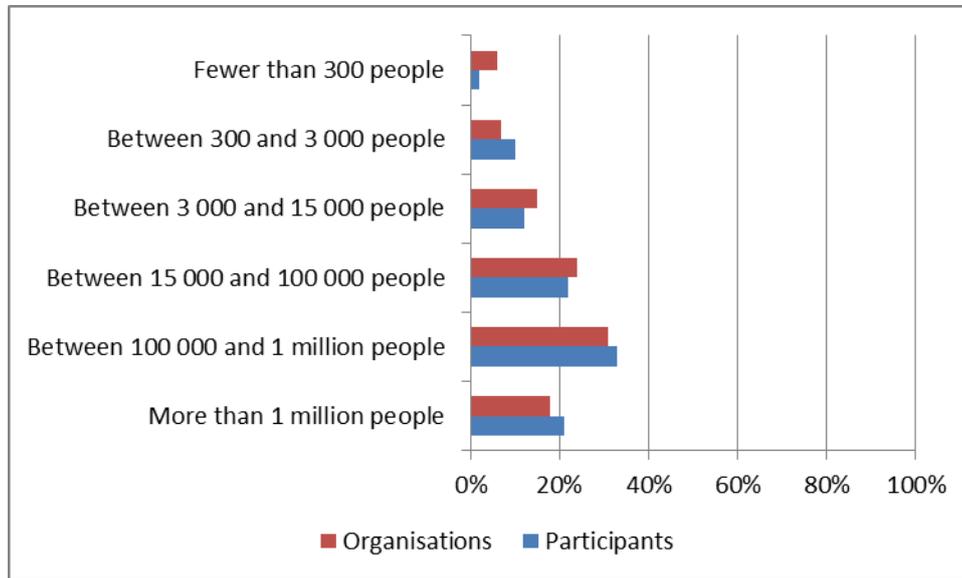
Graph 17. Settlement size

Participants' activity status

The activity status of respondents was described using a variable which allowed checking up to three statuses from the list with seven choices. The most frequently chosen statuses are "in education/school", "volunteering" and "employed". The least chosen was "self-employed/entrepreneur".
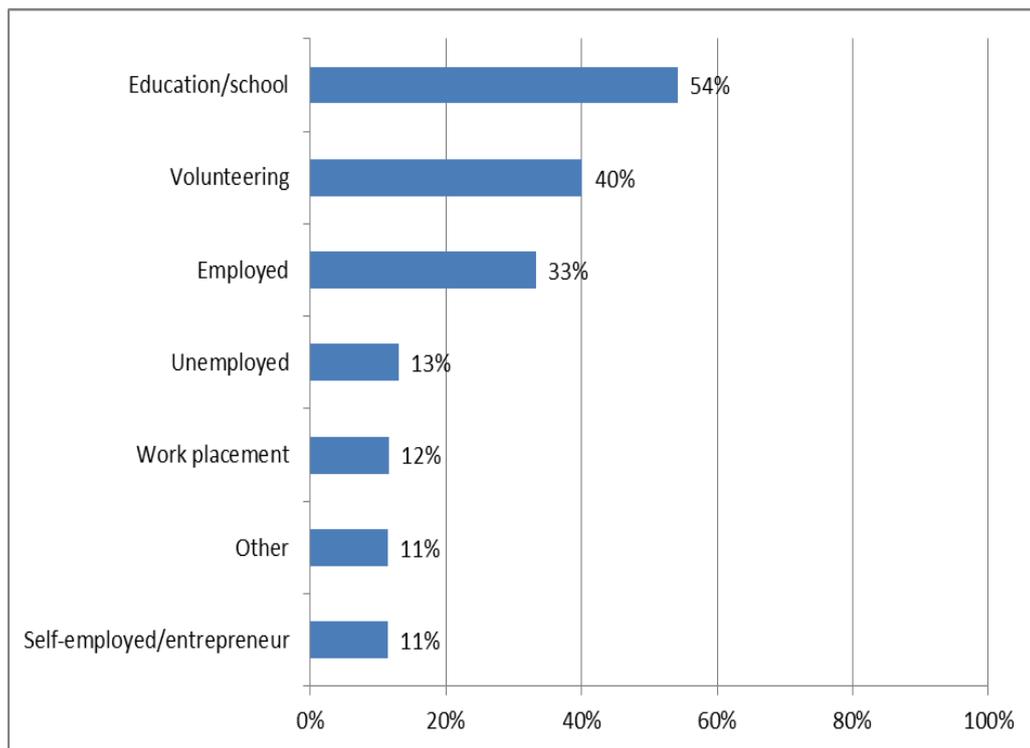
Graph 18. Respondents' activity status[58]

The sum of percentages exceeds 100% because each respondent had the opportunity to check up to three statuses. The activity status shows that 54% of respondents were in "education/school". Education was the only category which was checked only once – respondents who chose education did not choose any other categories. The second most chosen status was volunteering (40%) and the third was employed (33%).

The finding that all statuses except 'in education' appear as sort of part-time statuses indicates that there may be a measurement error. Unemployment by its definition cannot be a 'part-time' status. It is possible that some people in education or working want to do more work, or work in addition to what they already are doing – but they are not unemployed. A probable explanation of the error might be that respondents themselves were not able to choose a proper response category; in face-to-face surveys, interviewers can explain and assist in choosing the correct response category. Possibly the same applies to other categories – there is no reason to believe that mistakes were made only in relation to the category of unemployment.

Gender

About two thirds of respondents are women. Compared to the Youth in Action activity report 2011, women are somewhat overrepresented in the sample. In the activity report, the distribution between genders was 50:50. The difference can be explained as an effect of self-selection into the survey.

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[58] What is/are your main field(s) of activity? Please choose a maximum of three activities.
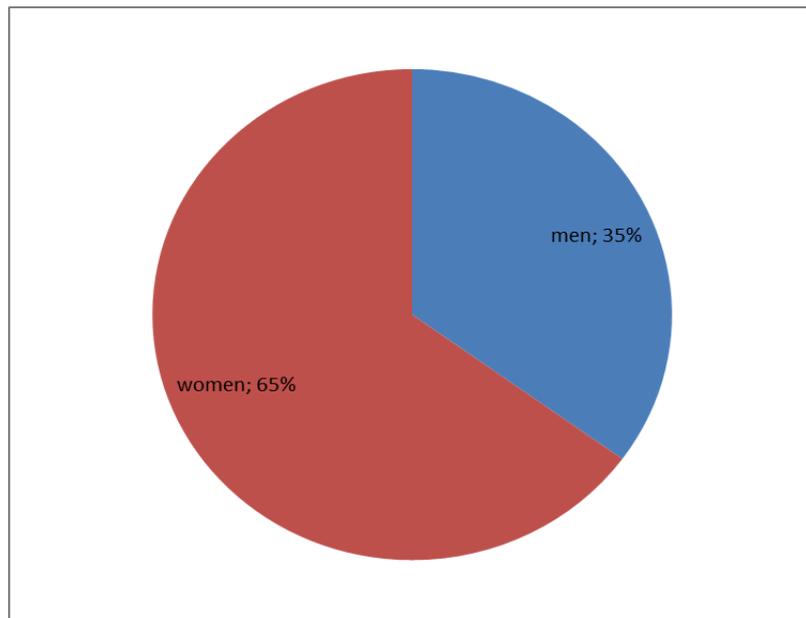
Graph 19. Gender distribution

Highest level of education

Two thirds of respondents (64%) have obtained tertiary education. About one quarter obtained secondary level education (23%) and one tenth post-secondary education (8%).
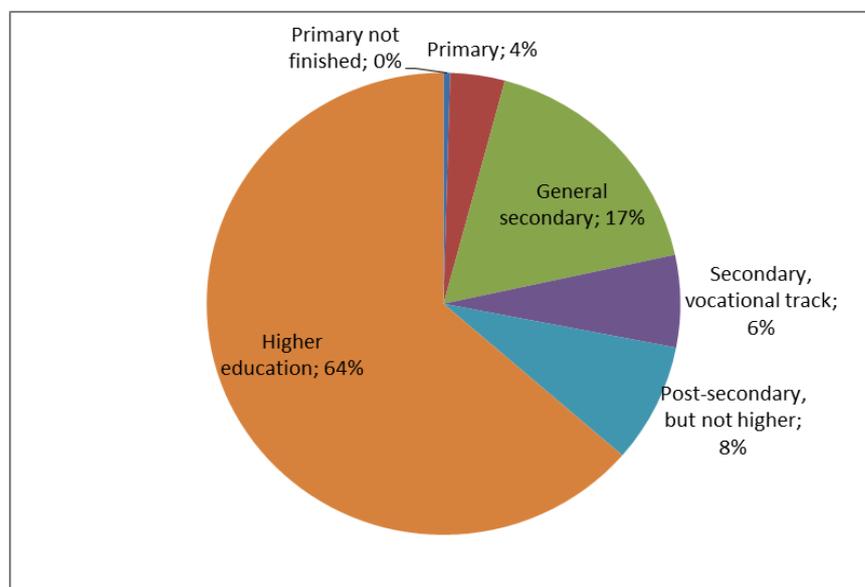
Graph 20. The highest level of education acquired

Annex 2 - An overview of Youthpass

This annex contains background information about the main implementation steps, core data and current state of play of Youthpass – with the state of affairs end of February 2013. Responsibility for Youthpass and its implementation in the Youth in Action programme lies with the European Commission (COM). The SALTO Training & Cooperation Resource Centre (SALTO T&C RC) located at JUGEND für Europa, the National Agency (NA) for the Youth in Action programme (YiA) in Germany, has the mandate to implement the related processes.

The conceptual background of Youthpass

The main idea to develop a tool to recognise the learning outcomes that young people attain in an activity supported by the - at that time - YOUTH programme, appeared at the end of 2004. The core idea was developed, based on the implementation of the lifelong learning strategy of the European Commission, on the needs of the participants as described in the mid-term evaluation of the YOUTH programme, and in line with strategic developments for the youth field as highlighted in the first so-called Pathways Paper[59].

The recognition of non-formal and informal learning started to get higher attention in the education and later also in the youth field. More and more countries have been developing recognition strategies that include the implementation of recognition tools. Youthpass is in this regard a good example and a model to adapt. Such developments are underpinned by the attention to the topic within the EU Youth Strategy[60] and the recent Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning[61].

The first launch of Europass - a range of instruments to make learning visible - was in January 2005. To demonstrate a close link between both tools, the name Youthpass was chosen.

The development of Youthpass started in April 2005. The COM is responsible for the integration and implementation of Youthpass in the Youth in Action programme. The mandate to develop Youthpass instruments and to facilitate the implementation process is since then with SALTO T&C RC.

Youthpass is a European strategy for validation and recognition of non-formal learning within the context of the Youth in Action programme. The strategic aims of Youthpass and the development of the instruments and the support measures are based on the following four elements:

- Reflection upon the personal non-formal learning process;
- Social recognition of youth work;
- Employability of young people and youth workers;

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[59] Pathways Towards Validation and Recognition of Education, Training and Learning in the Youth Field, 2004: http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/EKCYP/Youth_Policy/docs/Education_Training_Learning/Policy/2004_validation_and_recognition.pdf

[60] An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering, 2009: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0200:FIN:EN:PDF

[61] Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, 2012: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:398:0001:0005:EN:PDF

- Active participation of young people in society.

To create links with European lifelong learning policies, the European key competences framework[62] was chosen as the structure within the Youthpass Certificate to describe the competences gained through youth work. The European framework for key competences for lifelong learning, released at the end of 2006, identifies and defines the key abilities and knowledge commonly recognised as easing achieving employment, personal fulfilment, social inclusion and active citizenship.

Milestones of Youthpass developments: existing certificates, multilingualism, the technical tool, implementation

Youthpass consists of certificates, entitled to participants of activities supported by the Youth in Action programme. They are received on a voluntary basis. Each instrument follows the same logic and contains the same elements. The instrument provides a coherent framework and consists of:

- Confirmation of participation;
- General description of the activity, describing the context (e.g. Youth Exchanges, European Voluntary Service, Youth Initiatives or Training & Networking projects);
- Description of the project in the context of which the certificate is issued;
- Individualised description of the learning outcomes using the EU key competences as a framework.

Youthpass developments April 2005 – February 2013

2005   The SALTO Training & Cooperation Resource Centre starts the development of Youthpass

2006   Test phases Youthpass for Youth Exchanges, European Voluntary Service and for Training Courses

2007   Official adoption of the Youthpass implementation by the Youth in Action Programme Committee, retroactively valid from January 2007
Launch of the website www.youthpass.eu, with Youthpass certificates for Youth Exchanges and European Voluntary Service available in English

2008   Since the beginning of 2008, translations of website and certificates
Youthpass certificates for Training Courses are available
Youthpass available for centralised projects

2009   Publishing of the Youthpass Guide
Youthpass certificates for Action 3.1 (Youth Exchanges and Training Courses), providing the certificate also to the neighbouring regions
Youthpass certificates for AMICUS

2010   Youthpass for Youth Initiatives (Action 1.2)

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[62] The European framework for key competences, 2006:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/key_en.htm

2011	The Key competences are integrated in the Youthpass certificates for Youth Exchanges (Action 1.1/3.1)
2012	Launch of Youthpass for Training & Networking activities (seminars, partnership building and networking activities, etc.), replacing the earlier certificates for Training Courses
2013	Youthpass for Youth Democracy projects and for Structured Dialogue Planned test phase for Youthpass beyond Youth in Action

Multilingualism

The website www.youthpass.eu and the Youthpass certificates should be available in as many as possible official languages of the Youth in Action Programme context and beyond. This would allow young people and youth workers to be able to better understand Youthpass and use it to its full potential.

State of play regarding website and certificate translations

- The website www.youthpass.eu is available in 25 languages.
- The Youthpass for Youth Exchanges (renewed version with key competences from 2011) is available in 11 languages.
- The Youthpass for European Voluntary Service is available in 23 languages.
- The Youthpass for Youth Initiative is available in 17 languages.
- The Youthpass for Training and Networking is available in 9 languages.

Detailed and updated information about which languages are available can be found here https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/youthpass/languages/. The translations of the website and the certificates are carried out by the respective National Agencies of the Youth in Action programme.

Implementation strategy

Since the beginning of the implementation of Youthpass, SALTO T&C RC and its partners in the Youthpass Advisory Group (European Commission, EU-CoE youth partnership, European Youth Forum, different National Agencies of the Youth in Action programme, experts from NGOs, and trainer experts) are working with a wider strategy, the corner stones of which are illustrated by the following mind-map:
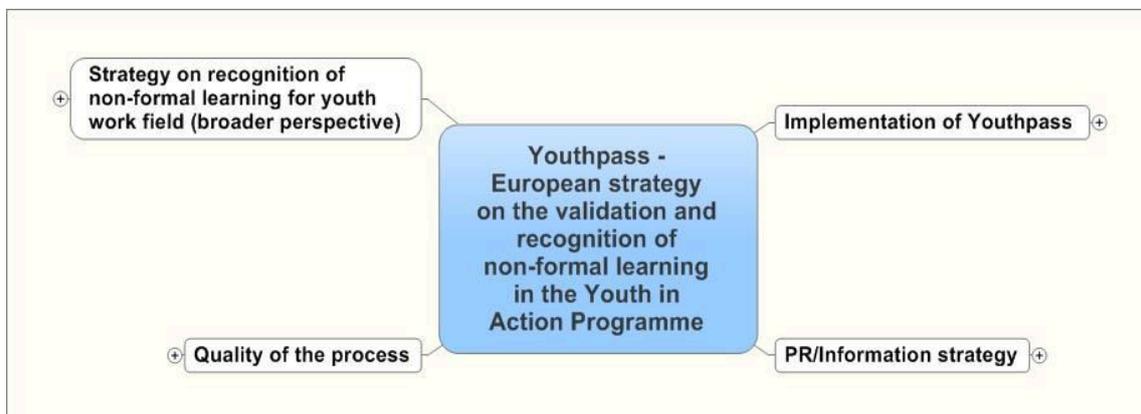
The following lists present the main strategic elements of each of the corner stones:

Implementation of Youthpass

- In the current framework, each Youthpass certificate has to be adapted to the nature of the sub-action in which it is used: Youthpass for EVS, for example, considers the specificities of EVS as a long-term volunteering activity; Youthpass for training activities focuses on a group activity for youth workers/youth leaders. Currently, Youthpass exists in five different formats; two more are being developed in 2013;
- The Youthpass website www.youthpass.eu contains also a technical section to generate Youthpass certificates;
- Facilitation of the development of multilingualism of the website and of the Youthpass certificates;
- Innovative developments, e.g. transition of Youthpass to the next programme generation, or implementing Youthpass beyond Youth in Action (for trainers/youth workers/youth leaders; adaptation to similar formats). In 2013 two innovative projects are being implemented:
  - o Youthpass will be tested with interested organisations implementing youth activities similar to Youth in Action but not supported by this programme;
- Monitoring of Youthpass implementation:
  - o Youthpass statistics are available any time with regard to numbers, country scope, Sub-Actions, etc.
  - o Youthpass contact persons are nominated by each Youth in Action National Agency. Contact persons cooperate closely with the SALTO T&C RC and are supported regularly. Youthpass contact persons transfer information within the NAs and outside, implement the necessary translations, support the development of a strategy to work on recognition of non-formal and informal learning, etc.
  - o In 2012/2013 the Youthpass impact survey is being carried out, supported by the COM, SALTO T&C RC, NAs, YFJ and experts. The results will be presented to the Programme Committee in spring. SALTO T&C RC in cooperation with NAs SK, DE, HU, LT and FR will implement an evaluation seminar in June 2013 to present and discuss the results.

PR/Information strategy

- Development and maintenance of information sections on different websites: Youthpass, SALTO and Youthnet;
- Regular newsletter: ca. 3,500 registered recipients at the time of writing this report, 8 issues since the end of 2011;
- Publishing articles about recognition of non-formal learning, Youthpass and learning in theory and practise: e.g. in 2013 in the Council of Europe's "Learning mobility and non-formal learning in European contexts. Policies, approaches and examples", in 2012 for the IJAB "Forum", and related to a recognition conference in Germany;
- Practical publications about Youthpass and recognition: 5 publications since 2009 – available on www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/downloads/
  - o Youthpass Guide (2009, 2011 update and an additional chapter);
  - o Youthpass for All (2009, update 2012, together with SALTO Inclusion);

- o Youthpass in the EVS Training Cycle (2010);
- o Unlocking Recognition Doors (2011, together with SALTO South East Europe and the Youth in Action National Agency Slovenia);
- o Youthpass Unfolded (2012, together with SALTO Inclusion and the Youth in Action National Agency Germany).
  - ▪ Essays by different authors about interesting topics related to Youthpass and recognition, available on www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/downloads/
- o Recognition of non-formal learning in Europe. Challenges and opportunities (2012);
- o Recognition needs zero stage. Convincing ourselves (2012);
- o Youthpass and Human Resource Development. The missing link towards employability (2012);
- o The Youthpass process and Learning to Learn. Some ideas for practitioners (2010).
  - ▪ Several of the publications have also been translated, or are undergoing translations, into several languages;
  - ▪ Video: The story of Youthpass 1&2 (2012, together with the Estonian NA), a visual explanation of what is Youthpass and how to work with it.

Quality of the Youthpass process and the process of implementation

- ▪ Training strategy: Implementation of training courses together with different NAs and SALTO Resource Centres to highlight or foster different steps of the Youthpass implementation. Since 2005, SALTO T&C RC has been involved in the implementation of 24 training activities;
- ▪ Youthpass Recognition Team: Since 2007, the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre works together with eight trainers from different countries all over Europe. Using their experience, different backgrounds and potential to develop Youthpass further, and building at the same time on the common knowledge and ideas, the team provides a strong support structure;
- ▪ Support and attention given to challenging processes or target groups by support activities, e.g. Youthpass for All! (2009) – a publication focusing on inclusion target groups (based on a seminar in France in 2009), Youthpass in the EVS Training Cycle (2010) – a publication focusing on the training cycle and its contribution to the Youthpass process (based on a training course in Slovenia 2009, advanced training course in May 2013 in Portugal);
- ▪ Cooperation with other trainer groups and structures (such as Youth in Action National Agencies and SALTO Resource Centres) to implement the Youthpass process in regular activities, supporting the wider use and a proper implementation e.g. in the network training courses of the Youth in Action network, in SALTO Resource Centres and the Youth in Action National Agencies' trainer pools.

Strategy on recognition of non-formal learning in the youth field (wider perspective)

- • Contribution to the development and writing of the Pathways paper 2.0 (published in January 2011);

- SALTO T&C RC is an active member of the Expert group on recognition (since 2011);
- Involvement in the preparation and implementation of further strategic measures e.g. Symposium on recognition of non-formal learning/education and youth work (November 2011 in Strasbourg), SEE Symposium on recognition of non-formal learning and youth work (October 2012 in Tirana/Albania), Eastern Partnership youth forum event under the Lithuanian Presidency (planned in October 2013);
- Contribution to the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy in regards to the recognition of non-formal learning and/or youth work; e.g. to the process in Germany with an international conference "Cross-border mobility as learning environment and its dimensions of recognition" (December 2012);
- Contribution to the implementation of the *Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning,* with a specific focus on the validation procedures appropriate for young people. Also, providing contribution from the youth field e.g. contribution to the development of an expert paper for the Bund-Länder-Prozess in Germany (in 2013);
- Contribution to the Member States Expert Group on Peer Learning on creative and innovative potential of young people (since December 2012).

The different strategical measures listed can only be successfully implemented with esp. colleagues from National Agencies and cooperation partners from all over Europe and from different levels, supporting the idea and the implementation of Youthpass and recognition of non-formal learning in the youth field.
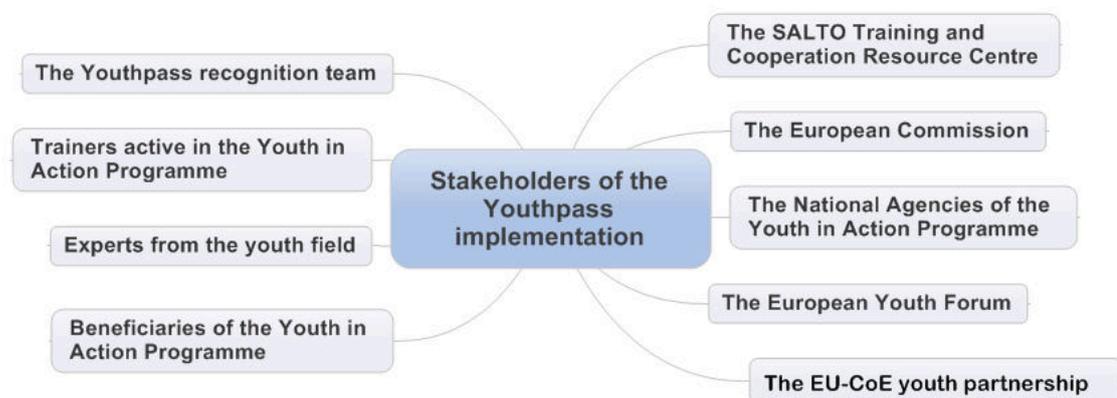
The above map shows the important stakeholder groups involved in the implementation of the strategies and practices.

Resources for the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre

The different Youthpass instruments were developed together with colleagues from Youth in Action National Agencies, the European Youth Forum, beneficiaries and experts. Once an instrument is ready for implementation and made available for use in the technical part of the Youthpass website, Youth in Action National Agencies contribute to the communication of its existence.

Youth in Action National Agencies nominated so-called Youthpass contact persons who are responsible for the implementation of Youthpass at national level. Tasks of contact persons involve: facilitating the translation process of website and certificates, informing colleagues about developments, being accessible for beneficiaries and taking care of measures like training courses, information sessions and national support to recognition strategies. These tasks are in addition to all other relevant tasks related to the implementation of the programme. Real full time resources being used by National Agency Youthpass contact persons and other colleagues who provide information and counselling for beneficiaries are difficult to measure.

Resources used by the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre can be clearly identified. About half of the overall budget available for the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre is allocated to Youthpass. This means 1.5 full time staff (out of 3 people) working on the Youthpass development and implementation and half of the activity budget used for activities and content development.

Main trends and figures of Youthpass 2007-2012

All tables and graphs presented here below take into consideration the data from July 2007 to December 31, 2012.

Overall figures across years
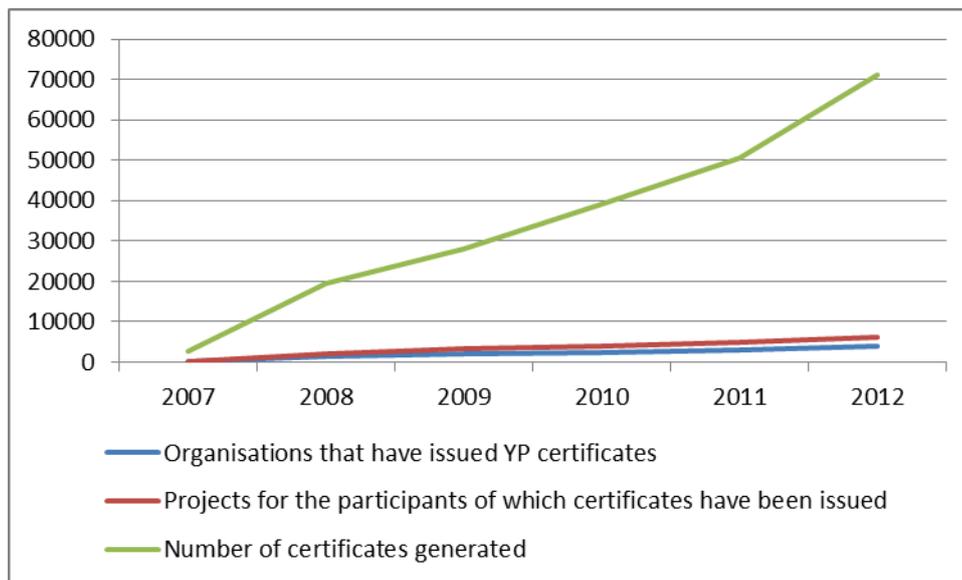
Graph A1. Numbers of certificates issued, projects that have implemented Youthpass, and organisations that have generated Youthpass, across years

Numbers of certificates issued across countries during specific years

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total	pm *
Belgium (DE)	9	32	54	5	15	24	139	556
Belgium (FR)	0	80	45	60	208	277	670	2,441
Belgium (NL)	0	346	389	727	550	768	2,780	7,084
Bulgaria	59	371	356	1,101	1,935	2,744	6,566	13,641
Czech Republic	30	529	497	998	1,064	1,274	4,392	12,203
Denmark	23	406	575	686	656	712	3,058	6,182
Germany	216	2,351	3,271	4,492	4,667	7,196	22,193	46,364
Estonia	65	252	619	970	1,094	1,207	4,207	7,763
Greece	72	772	635	590	1,042	1,401	4,512	9,934
Spain	49	769	1,764	1,487	2,918	3,933	10,920	28,332
France	139	1,192	1,838	1,966	2,284	2,519	9,938	32,754
Croatia[63]	0	0	0	24	366	914		1,160
Ireland	10	168	251	595	461	606	2,091	5,225
Italy	154	924	1,839	2,028	2,949	4,404	12,298	24,261
Cyprus	76	338	38	85	639	827	2,003	5,401
Latvia	3	470	570	1,237	1,095	1,256	4,631	6,981
Lithuania	29	444	837	1,107	1,329	1,759	5,505	9,200
Luxemburg	3	269	158	254	323	566	1,573	3,322
Hungary	30	426	564	1,190	1,193	1,536	4,939	14,199
Malta	0	107	242	106	135	582	1,172	2,792
Netherlands	15	422	1,109	1,037	1,019	1,291	4,893	10,022
Austria	48	565	925	912	1,186	1,190	4,826	9,048
Poland	106	1,398	2,162	3,257	3,838	6,538	17,299	41,031
Portugal	124	664	628	1,307	1,079	1,629	5,431	9,776
Romania	114	801	1,546	2,468	3,315	4,934	13,178	22,169
Slovenia	83	297	391	589	788	1,048	3,196	7,196
Slovakia	19	320	357	416	822	930	2,864	8,206
Finland	6	294	615	920	705	1,112	3,652	8,182
Sweden	23	129	423	428	693	561	2,257	9,089
United Kingdom	416	1,055	1,413	1,740	2,442	2,641	9,707	25,537
Iceland	1	99	43	172	502	327	1,144	2,894
Liechtenstein	0	28	72	18	11	208	337	828
Norway	0	59	147	432	512	710	1,860	5,586
Switzerland[64]	0	0	0	0	288	571	859	752
Turkey	676	2,954	3,033	3,850	5,536	8,744	24,793	35,728
(FYROM)[65]	0	0	0	272	495	1,216		
EACEA[66]	0	111	544	1,007	1,717	1,968		

Pm: YiA participants (2007-2011) in decentralised actions (except 1.3, 5.1 and TCP).

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[63] Croatia entered the preparation measures of joining the Youth in Action programme in 2010.
[64] Switzerland joined the Programme countries of the Youth in Action programme in 2011.
[65] Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia entered the preparation measures in 2010.
[66] The organisations implementing these projects come from various countries.

Youthpass certificates across the various Sub-Actions of the Youth in Action programme issued during specific years

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
1.1 - Youth Exchanges	2,319	13,623	16,710	22,514	25,742	31,376
1.2 - Youth Initiatives	0	0	63	636	2,985	6,674
2 - European Voluntary Service	199	2,232	3,756	4,061	5,100	5,428
3.1 - Youth Exchanges	0	0	1,564	2,718	4,374	8,104
3.1 - Training and Networking	0	0	721	1,940	3,006	5,924
4.3 - Training and Networking	81	3,595	5,299	7,096	8,925	12,840
4.6 - Partnerships	0	0	0	24	311	264
Youthpass for AMICUS	0	0	6	179	29	3
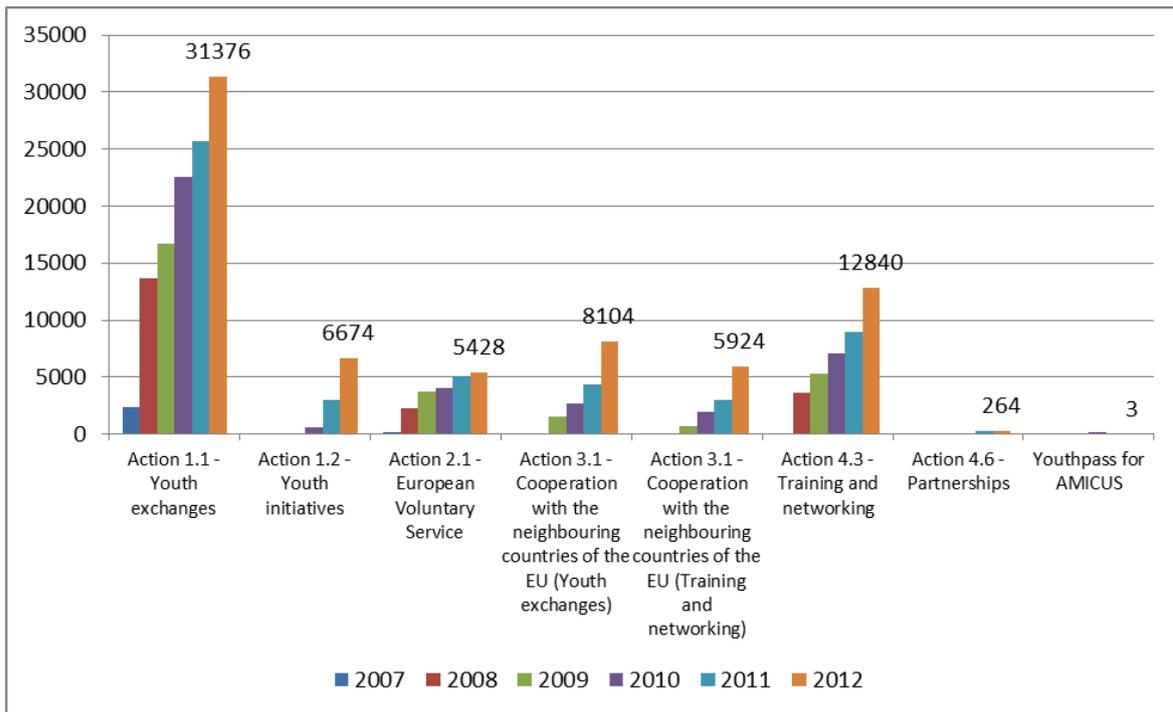
Graph A2. Trends of issuing Youthpass certificates in all the Sub-Actions across years. The actual value is shown for 2012 figures

Youthpass certificates per gender per year
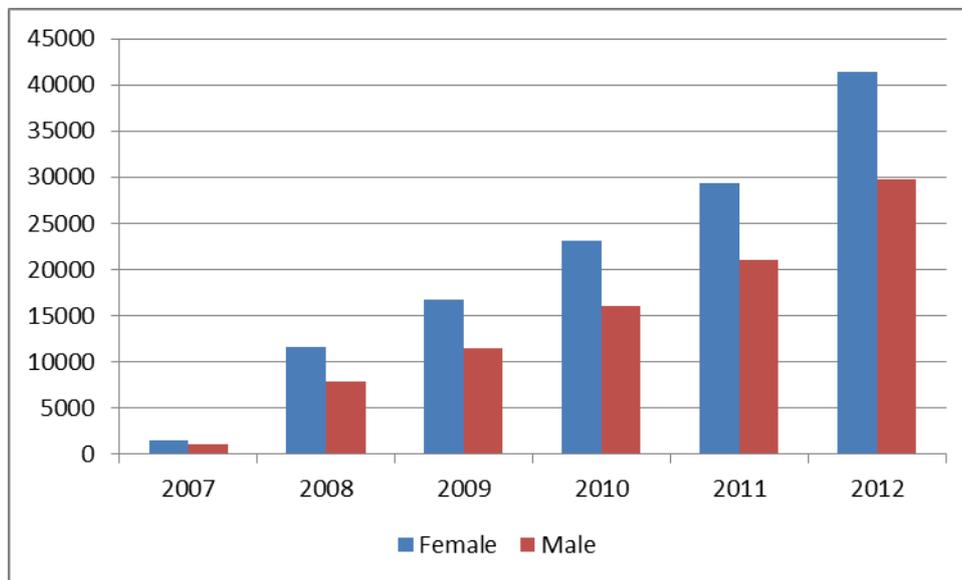
Graph A3. Numbers of Youthpass certificates issued for male and female participants across years

Age range of the people[67] for whom Youthpass has been issued

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Born in 2003	0	0	0	0	1	14
Born in 2002	0	1	0	0	2	18
Born in 2001	0	1	1	2	5	54
Born in 2000	1	2	2	2	6	84
Born in 1999	0	5	6	25	41	353
Born in 1998	3	6	11	33	204	734
Born in 1997	0	4	13	181	557	1,451
Born in 1996	0	3	129	578	1,245	2,218
Born in 1995	2	84	454	1,139	1,964	2,883
Born in 1994	9	267	791	1,772	2,392	3,232
Born in 1993	23	574	1,361	2,139	2,704	3,034
Born in 1992	53	899	1,601	2,331	2,345	2,998
Born in 1991	106	1,241	1,659	1,965	2,441	3,045
Born in 1990	144	1,241	1,487	2,219	2,568	3,229
Born in 1989	202	993	1,666	2,233	2,422	3,409
Born in 1988	135	1,158	1,661	1,975	2,436	3,004
Born in 1987	134	1,054	1,427	1,923	2,352	2,648
Born in 1986	141	956	1,373	1,751	2,000	2,192
Born in 1985	124	827	1,355	1,627	1,682	1,741
Born in 1984	108	793	1,214	1,312	1,220	1,372
Born in 1983	84	777	1,037	1,015	951	1,065
Born in 1982	96	507	763	803	775	858
Born in 1981	50	402	519	524	595	587
Born in 1980	55	290	394	482	464	374
Born 1970-1979	104	877	1,268	1,380	1,391	1,567
Born 1960-1969	19	279	383	441	526	616
Born 1950-1959	13	126	166	192	219	213
Born earlier than 1950	3	28	27	27	47	48

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[67] Information about the birth date is voluntary in the certificates for Youth Exchanges, Youth Initiatives, and Training and Networking (compulsory in EVS). The basis for counting is an overall number of participants who gave information about their age. The years of birth 2001-2003 might either result from typing mistakes, test projects in the database, or participants who are younger than foreseen.

Proportion of Youthpass certificates where at least one key competence has been used

	2010	2011	2012
Action 1.1[68]		22%	35%
Action 1.2	60%	56%	53%
Action 2	91%	91%	90%
Action 3.1[69] (Youth Exchanges)		27%	34%
Action 3.1 (Training and networking)	38%	38%	34%
Action 4.3	31%	29%	27%

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[68] The individual section including the key competences was only introduced to the Youth Exchanges certificates (Action 1.1 and 3.1) in June 2011.
[69] Same as above.

List of further references

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The EU-CoE youth partnership (2012)
http://youth-partnership.eu.coe.int/youthpartnership/publications/Coyote/Coyote18/Index.html

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http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:398:0001:0005:EN:PDF

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Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the member states meeting with the Council, on youth work
Council of the European Union (2010)
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Annex 3 – Examples of Youthpass implementation

Youthpass from the viewpoint of a trainer

Mieke[70], youth worker and trainer in Ireland

"In our organisation, we have used the Youthpass process in various ways. We have implemented many projects and in some of these projects we started using the process, but could often not finalise it with a Youthpass as at that time the certificate was not yet available.

We have used the Youthpass process in Youth Exchanges, Youth Initiatives, EVS, a Youth Democracy Project and in Training Courses.

The most successful implementation was during a short-term EVS project. We hosted five volunteers for ten weeks in our small village in the west of Ireland. The volunteers helped us with the organisation and implementation of a small human rights and art festival. This project had a huge learning curve for all involved. The five volunteers lived together in a big house and the interesting thing was that a lot of their learning came from sharing the house; five people, four nationalities, five different backgrounds. Living together was not easy.

We implemented the Youthpass process by meeting regularly in order to explore and share what learning was happening. Youthpass was explained to the volunteers and we explored what they wanted to learn while here. They worked on this by themselves but also discussed it with each other in two small groups.

After this initial meeting we met regularly and checked where we were, adjusted the learning plan, added new goals or new unexpected learning.

Towards the end of the project, the key competences were explained and during the last week, after the festival was finished, we asked the volunteers to write their learning outcomes and to fit them within the key competences framework.

For me as the support person, this was one of the most successful ways that we implemented Youthpass. I was involved with the process from the beginning. I managed to create a clear plan and implemented this plan successfully. It was clearly visible in the described learning outcomes.

Another example was a youth exchange we hosted three years ago. The exchange was developed and organised by a small group of 17 to 18 year olds. We hosted three other countries: Italy, Morocco and Jordan. Each country brought six young people and two leaders. We hosted the exchange in our own county in the west of Ireland, in a beautiful natural area. The young people who initiated the exchange wanted it to be workshop based and the workshops to be based on personal development.

On the first day of the exchange, we all created a journal that we could use every day, both during the workshops but also after we had our "chat" time in the evenings.

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[70] Full name known.

I personally feel that our chat time at the end of the day was the time that most of the learning was recognised. We sat together in national groups in a comfortable place, generally my bedroom (very cosy!) and just talked about the day… This chat could be very superficial (gossiping), but in general most of the cultural aspect/explorations/shocks will come up, will be discussed and digested. It is very interesting to follow this process, as often things that are very hard to deal with in the first day or two, can slowly become more understood, accepted and at times even liked!

After this chat, I gave everyone a chance to write in their journal. This is also a lovely moment, where all are thinking and writing and trying to make sense of things.

During this exchange a lot of emotions came up related to different religious point of views and the differences in ethics/beliefs/acceptance of gender issues etc. this needed a lot of discussions and making sense of. We had to really deal with it, look at it, and digest it. It was a real "learning" exchange, and it was great that we took the time for this learning to be recognised and that the young people had the opportunity to question themselves, each other and their view of the wider world. Without the Youthpass process we would not have given the learning such a central position and I think that a lot of it might have been lost or just have been left standing in a corner, so to speak.

At the end of the exchange we did a big evaluation about what we learned, participants were asked to create a song about their experiences, about their learning and they performed these songs for each other. In the evening we had computers and everyone was asked to put their learning outcomes (they already had them gathered in their journal) into a word document so that they could be transferred into a Youthpass.

One aspect that has become very clear to me during exchanges is the fact that we cannot always rely on our partners in supporting the Youthpass process. Often partner organisations have not heard about Youthpass, or they think that it is just a certificate, or that it will not make any difference to the exchange. I find it quite hard to bridge this as a leader. I always bring it up during the Advance Planning Visit, it generally seems that the process is understood, but then when the group arrives there is no connection with it. I feel that this process is hard to do together in an international group, as it is often strongly connected to emotions and feelings. It is easier to share emotions and feelings in your own language. So, as a result, I would not fully know what happens in other groups and how they deal with the process. I find this quite a stumbling block and keep trying to improve on it."

Youthpass from the viewpoint of a participant

Santa (25)[71], Latvia

"For me, Youthpass has served as a great tool to transmit the experience and competencies that I have acquired during my EVS.

In 2009, I did my long term project of 12 months in an immigrants' centre of „Fundacion Ataretaco" in Tenerife, the Canary Islands. Although I had no previous

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teaching experience, all my EVS activities were about giving lessons of basic English and Spanish and informatics as well as alphabetisation.

After finishing my service, I decided to stay for some time on the island, because I wanted to learn more about immigration. That is a very important topic in the present of the Canary Island and will be the future of Latvia.

The Evaluation Commission of the Master on Social Inclusion was giving some extra points for those who already had any previous experience in the area. The competition to enter was quite a difficult one. So, I decided to attach to the application my Youthpass, the only experience I had working on social inclusion. I entered in the Master programme and it could be that it was also thanks to those points that my Youthpass had contributed.

Then, after finishing the Master and joining my PhD, I started looking for a job in Tenerife. There was a nice offer for a part-time English teacher in a very good school. The only problem was that they asked for previous experience in teaching. The only relevant one I had was from EVS, therefore I attached my Youthpass to the CV. And I got that job!

I couldn't have imagined that my EVS as well as Youthpass impacted me so much, but in fact they have a lot!"

Recognition of Youthpass as a transfer document

In Italy, there are some good practices worth to be known and valorized. The sources of information are known by authors.

They are mainly focused on two specific areas:

   a) On the one hand, some schools and universities usually recognise the participation of young people in projects financed by the Youth in Action Programme according to the following mechanism: youth organisations sign a preliminary framework agreement with the university and/or with the school, which envisages that the students participating in a EVS project or in other projects financed by Youth in Action will receive "credits". The number of "credits" is diverse (generally from 1 to 5) and it depends on the duration of the activity and from the type of the implemented project.

Here are two concrete cases:

At university level, we refer to the organisation TDM 2OOO, located in Sardinia:

This organisation signed an agreement with the University of Cagliari in order to recognise the experience of the students involved in EVS and in other specific YiA projects.

This agreement has been used by twelve students from the faculty of political sciences and literature and students from the Faculty of foreign languages having participated in EVS projects.

This practice, without formal agreements, was also used within other types of projects than EVS and about other 30 students got the recognition of their experience.

At school level, there is the case of two schools located in the little municipality of Villafranca Sicula in Sicily, where the recognition of the Youthpass certificate is based on a non-formal agreement between the municipality of Villafranca Sicula and the schools. There were students who participated in the youth exchange n. IT-11-60-2011-R1.

It has to be noticed that in Italy the positive experience by TDM in Sardinia has already been promoted by other organisations, e.g. by Xena and the "Centro Diritti Umani" in the municipality of Padua, and by the Eurodesk PLD located in Prato and by the Prato Municipality in Tuscany.

Also other schools, besides the ones in Sicily, recognised the experiences by their young students.

b) On the other hand, we know that the Youthpass certificates which were issued thanks to the participation in EVS projects, allowed the recognition of additional credits points to young people who decided, after their EVS, to participate to the "Servizio Civile Nazionale" (National Civil Service).

Testimonies

The following quotes are a based on feedback from participants and organisation representatives of Youth in Action projects to the questionnaires of the Youthpass Impact Study. They represent a variety of certain aspects which are indicated by the headings.

Youthpass as a tool to enhance employability

"I can't say it's a "Youthpass success story" but Youthpass was part of the success. One of my local participants involved in a youth exchange last year was for the first time in a self-confidence process after a long period of educational and personal difficulties. Youthpass used as a tool, especially with him during and after the project allowed us - him and me - to highlight abilities, competencies. Those elements gave to him a positive self-vision useful for his future. Then, in the following months, he obtained a first qualification and a part time work as youth worker."

Samuel, youth worker

"One of the young people I work with learned to be a cook. In his youth exchange he prepared meals for 45 persons. He became aware of his mathematical competence during this youth exchange. For a youngster with low educational level, without many diplomas, receiving a Youthpass certificate was important. His mother talked to me a year ago, explained me that this boy applied for a job. The self-confidence he had developed by working on his Youthpass and his mathematical competences and showing his Youthpass to his potential employer made that he was chosen for this job."

Gabi, youth worker

"Kuna soov oli projektis osaletud riiki tööd leida, siis aitas noortepassi tunnistus mul tõestada oma kogemust, mille alusel väljastati mulle tööviisa ja sain peale projekti ametlikult tööle hakata."
"I wanted to find work in the country where I had participated in the project. Youthpass helped me to prove my experience. This was the basis for obtaining my work visa, so I could start working officially after the project."

Andra, participant

"One of our volunteers applied for a trainee job in Belgium. For that application the Youthpass was really valuable, because it clearly states the necessity of non-formal learning and the skills the volunteer gained throughout his voluntary service. The volunteer got the job and now applies for another one in Slovenia. As a matter of fact, he actually did become a European citizen."

Youth worker

Youthpass as a tool to reflect on learning

"Youthpass helped me to understand what I have learned. In the process of writing Youthpass you totally reflect on your activities - I think that's cool. I have two Youthpasses, one from my EVS and other from a training course held in February this year. Just want to thank EC for thinking of youth... :)"

Bozidar, participant

Youthpass - education - employability

"The students from Albania who were involved in the project were especially appreciative of their Youthpass certificates as they had not been able to receive anything comparable in Albania which assessed and acknowledged their achievements in areas other than academic studies. As far as I am aware, nearly all of them have used them as part of their CV's and they have been well accepted by educational, training and employment establishments in their communities. The Youthpass, I think, also made them aware of the importance of the skills they used in other areas of their lives."

Mandy, youth worker

Youthpass and youth work

"Dopo la partecipazione a dei progetti del programma gioventù in azione ho sviluppato un tool, chiamato "Learning Agenda", presente sul sito SALTO, per registrare giornalmente le competenze acquisite a rendere più agevole la scrittura dello Youthpass."
"After having participated in the projects of the Youth in Action programme I developed a tool called "Learning Agenda", which is now on the SALTO site and which allows people to record daily the skills acquired to make it easier to write Youthpass."

Annibale, participant

Youthpass and university

"A Bulgarian boy applied for a university education in England. His English test results were not as good as the ones of other applicants but he was one of the first in the list of accepted applicants due to his Youthpass certificate which confirmed his active citizenship."

Youth worker

"Ten days ago I received a conditioned offer from a British University. My application was largely based on non-formal activities, e.g. participation in Youth Exchanges. I believe that having a document certifying certain skills acquired as a result of involvement in Youth Exchanges is a success."

Mădălin, participant

Appreciation of Youthpass by participants

"I think that the Youthpass is most important for youngsters themselves. I know that our youngsters had put the Youthpass into a frame on the wall at home."

Youth worker

Annex 4 - Studies relevant for the Youthpass Impact Study

This section takes a brief look into three recent studies which address topics that are of relevance for this study.

Study on the impact of Non-Formal Education in youth organisations on young people's employability, commissioned by the European Youth Forum[72]

Authored by: *Manuel Souto-Otero (University of Bath)*, *Daniela Ulicna (ICF-GHK)*, *Loraine Schaepkens (ICF-GHK)*, *Viktoria Bognar (ICF-GHK)*

There is an increasing trend towards recognising the importance of non-formal learning and the perceived need to certify the competences acquired via learning processes outside formal education. Youthpass is one of the certification systems expected to play a higher role in this respect. There is also an increasing need for self-assessment. Youthpass could become an important aid for self-assessment and self-directed learning.

The study shows that there is a good match between those skills demanded by employers and those produced in the youth sector, with five of the six most frequently demanded soft skills also being amongst those skills developed to a greater extent in youth organisations – the exception being numeracy. The soft skills that employers most frequently demand include: communication skills, organisational/planning skills, decision-making skills, team working skills, confidence/ autonomy and numeracy. These soft-skills are seen as a key element for successful job performance.

In the European Youth Forum's study, employers mention that young people lack to some extent the skills of providing detailed information on what they learned in youth organisations. Enhancing these skills could help young people increase their employability.

Youthpass has the potential to make employers better understand the soft skills gained from non-formal learning activities and increase their trust of the learning outcomes.

Study on Mobility Developments in School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and Youth Exchanges (June 2012)[73]

ICON-INSTITUTE GmbH und CO KG Consulting Gruppe European Commission Education and Culture

The mobility study outlines that transversal skills have become an increasingly important theme over the past couple of decades. The twin processes of globalisation and an accelerating rapid technological development require a workforce able to adapt to new technologies, working methods and work organisation. Consequently, there is an increasing premium on skills that will enable an employee to learn continuously.

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[72] http://issuu.com/yomag/docs/reportnfe_print
[73] http://ec.europa.eu/education/documents/more-information/mobility-study-report.pdf

Globalisation also means that contacts with foreign countries and other cultures proliferate, and not only at managerial level. There is an increasing demand for workers to be competent in foreign languages, have knowledge of foreign markets, and be able to interact constructively with people from another cultural background than their own.

The study reports on the lack of internationally recognised learning mobility certification schemes. It mentions Youthpass as one of very few examples of systems, which are capable of comprehensively documenting experiences acquired during one's stay abroad.

Employers see skills and competences, which can be acquired through mobility experience, as an asset: a mobility experience, especially a long-term one, indicates presence of a number of important transversal skills and competences, like self-reliance, foreign language proficiency, adaptability, tolerance etc., which many employers see as important assets.

It would be important to develop a scheme that would be recognised by employers from different countries. Results of the study emphasise the role of Youthpass as a recognition and certification tool in this context.

The Future of Learning: Preparing for Change[74]

EUR 24960 EN – 2011 Authors: Christine Redecker, Miriam Leis, Matthijs Leendertse, Yves Punie, Govert Gijsbers, Paul Kirschner, Slavi Stoyanov and Bert Hoogveld

The Future of Learning report outlines a changing role of knowledge acquisition. In the past, learning was rather understood as acquiring knowledge at school, using certain methods. Knowledge was located in schools. Today, it is common understanding that passing on knowledge is not limited to certain institutions like schools or universities. In the future, emphasise will shift from learning certain things in a certain environment (school) to knowing one's learning style and ability to locate and acquire new knowledge independently from or with only some help from education professionals. Education professionals will guide students in identifying and selecting the learning opportunities that best fit their learning styles and objectives; to monitor progress, realign learning objectives and choices and intervene when difficulties arise; and to implement viable assessment, certification and accreditation mechanisms. The point of gravity of learning moves from schools to learner- centred learning pathways, tailored to individual learning needs, paces, modes and preferences.

It is also expected that by 2025, in view of increasing labour market dynamics, informally acquired skills need to become better recognised and mechanisms will have to be put in place that allow people to obtain formal recognition for their experiences and skills.

The report expects that the increased pace of change will bring new skills and competences to the fore, in particular generic, transversal and cross-cutting skills, which will enable citizens to flexibly and proactively respond to change and to seize and benefit from lifelong learning opportunities. Problem solving, reflection, creativity, critical thinking, learning to learn, risk-taking, collaboration, and entrepreneurship will become key competences for a successful life in the European society of the future.

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[74] http://ftp.jrc.es/EURdoc/JRC66836.pdf

The report states that today learning mobility is increasingly recognised as an important way in which young people can enhance their employability. In the future, it will become even more important for young people to invest in language skills and intercultural competences to be able to qualify for a job in an interrelated and interconnected world.

This study supports the findings from the Youthpass study that a tool to support reflection and self-directed learning is valuable. As learner-centred learning and skills obtained from outside of formal education systems become more and more important, Youthpass can be seen as one measure supporting competence acquisition and communicating it to stakeholders.